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NUMBER 21

COMICS FEATURE

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A PREVIEW OF THE JLA INDEX

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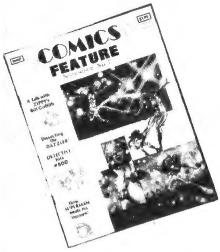

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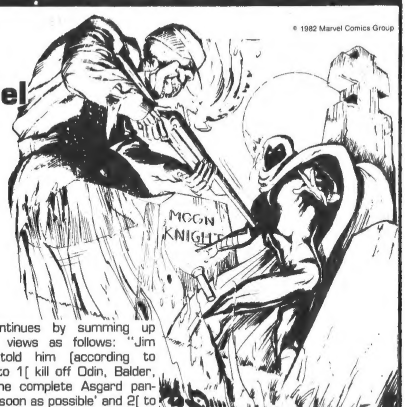
Doug Moench, Jim Shooter, and Death in the Marvel Universe

News Analysis and Opinion
by Hal Schuster



Doug Moench has accused Jim Shooter of ordering the mass execution of all of the Marvel Universe. The cast of **Master of Kung Fu**, Thor, Iron Man, and Captain America are to be among the first to go. The others will follow shortly. All of this is confirmed fact, or so Cat Yronwode of the **Buyers Guide for Comic Fandom** says.

To quote from Moench's statement as printed in Cat's column, "He offered me several choices. I could kill of Shang Chi, or replace him with a ninja, or turn him into a villain like Fu Manchu, and perhaps have a ninja hero try to bring him to justice...Jim also suggested that I kill off the entire supporting cast, including Nayland Smith, Leiko and Clive Reston. I have spent years with these characters. I love them. I told Jim I couldn't kill them. He told me I could go ahead and try to give the book a new direction without killing them, but he said, 'I doubt it will work.' This was all the committment I could expect from him. It didn't matter so much that he wanted me to kill off all the inhabitants of Asgard, in **Thor**. I didn't think it was such a good idea, but I could have done it. That wasn't why I quit. Ireally quit because of **Master of Kung Fu**. I quit because...I couldn't kill those characters."

But it doesn't stop there, "That was another thing. He said that Thor was stagnating so he suggested I kill off the entire Asgardian pantheon. He also wanted Don Blake killed so that only Thor himself would be left."

Cat continues by summing up Moench's views as follows: "Jim Shooter told him [according to Moench] to 1[kill off Odin, Balder, Sif and the complete Asgard pantheon 'as soon as possible' and 2[to prepare for a total overhaul on **Master of Kung Fu**. He also says that it was common knowledge that plans are afoot to 'replace Iron Man' with a new person in the same armour, and to 'kill Steve Rogers and have another guy put on the suit and be Captain America'. Another source at Marvel, who declines to be named, says that when **Team America** is cancelled, at least some of the five cyclists in the team will die."

To continue to press her point, she then quotes various unnamed sources at Marvel who insist that Shooter wants to totally destroy the Marvel Universe proper in either a "Big Bang" or a "Little Bang". She insists that she doesn't like to utilize unnamed sources but continues to do so anyway. Her justification? "If you think that this reads like the **National Enquirer**, imagine how i [sic] feel! But just remember their role in the John Belushi case." Unfortunately their role in the Carol Burnett case reads much truer to form—and she was the only one of the many injured who had the courage to call them at their game and press suit.

This is certainly not to imply that Cat Yronwode follows the irresponsible journalism of a publication such as the **National Enquirer**. Normally she is a very responsible journalist. However, even a responsible journalist, faced with the difficult choice of going into print without sufficient sources of record or not going into print in time to meet a deadline, will make the wrong choice. There is a very strong urge to print a story first. There is also a very strong need to print a story which covers a disaster which can be averted if the story is printed in time. Sometimes, with these multiple pressures, and under the ever-present pressure of a deadline, the responsible journalist is led to irresponsible action. And this is what seems to have overcome Cat Yronwode in this situation. Her story fails to bear significant cources of

record, and this both jeopardized the accuracy of the story and undermines the credibility of the account even if it were accurate.

To compound the error, **The Comic Reader** has taken every word of this report as gospel, without checking a single fact and without talking to anyone concerned. Mike Tiefenbacher, the Executive Editor of **TCR**, not only buys the report lock-stock-and-barrel, but goes on to theorize the real reason behind Shooter's actions. After suggesting that Shooter did not grow up with the Marvel Universe as a child, and that his early work was at DC with him only going over to Marvel in 1974 (eight years ago), he goes on to suggest, "And if he hasn't read the books faithfully and is confused by the heavy continuity, killing off all the old guard of characters is easily the best way for Jim Shooter not to be confused by what he reads in new comics. It's for his benefit."

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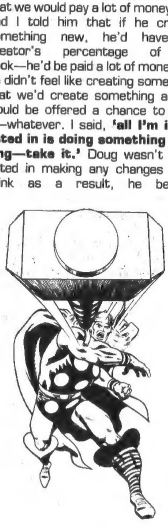
So there we have it. Jim Shooter plans the mass slaughter of all of the major characters in the Marvel Universe. The sources are either unnamed or Doug Moench in a totally unconfirmed report of his meeting with Shooter. Cat Yronwode reports the entire event and **The Comic Reader** picks up the story and helpfully reports the reason behind it. And yet something rings wrong. It seems too radical that the Editor-In-Chief of the world's best-selling line of comics would unilaterally end all of the characters, simply to end his own confusion as to continuity. Rather than simply consult his editors and writers or various accessible reference works, he terminates the superheroes that are his bread and butter. And before reporting all of this, no one consulted any of the writers or editors supposedly involved, besides Moench, a disgruntled former employee. Without doubting Moench's veracity, is it beyond the realm of possibility that he could have misunderstood or that his opinion could be temporarily colored by other events?

Comics Feature decided to do a little checking in the matter to see what could be learned. We spoke to Mark Gruenwald, the editor of **Iron Man, Thor,** and **Captain America**, three of the four supposedly doomed characters. Certainly if there were plans to bring about that major a change in his books he would be one of the first to know. His answer? "None of them or their supporting characters are going to die. It's not true. I can firmly say that Shooter never said to kill the characters. He said to be creative, do things that people won't expect. Doug Moench and Jim Shooter always had creative differences." That seems to be fairly clear. To continue along this line of clarification we then talked to Dennis O'Neil who, as the writer of **Iron Man**, would have to have been aware of any plans to off his character. According to him (which you will see elaborated in a mini-interview elsewhere in this news section), there are absolutely no plans to permanently have Tony Stark give up the armour in favor of anyone else. There is a brief storyline in which the armour is temporarily used by another man while Tony Stark suffers through an alcoholic situation but that resolves itself and in the end he redons his suit. Looking for the basis for the case held forth by Doug Moench and so readily accepted by most of the press, **Comics Feature** found only negative information. Information from the individuals most closely involved which tends to disagree with Moench and which tends to outright contradict that offered by Moench.

Finally, we went to Jim Shooter himself to see what he would say about the conversation between himself and Doug Moench in which he reportedly put forth the entire proposition, the proposition which so disturbed Moench that he had to immediately leave Marvel. What he answered seemed much more in line with the statements made by Mark Gruenwald and Dennis O'Neil than those of Doug Moench. "I felt it might be good to do something to revitalize the book [**Master of Kung Fu**]. I asked Doug to propose something. I told him that I would listen to any proposal, any suggestion, he could go crazy, create something new. He could get rid of all of the old characters, bring in a whole new [cast]—**whatever**, but to go off and get creative and do something wilk, something exciting or something that would get the attention of the people. I felt that there was a lot of talent in the book but it wasn't building, wasn't moving. It seemed to me it was a waste of enormous talent. So anyway, I told him that and told him that we would pay a lot of money for it and I told him that if he created something new, he'd have the creator's percentage of the book—he'd be paid a lot of money or if he didn't feel like creating something, that we'd create something and he would be offered a chance to write it—whatever. I said, **'all I'm interested in is doing something exciting—take it.'** Doug wasn't interested in making any changes and I think as a result, he became



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discouraged and decided he wanted to work elsewhere. That's fine. As far as Moon Knight or anything else goes, I've explained to the editorial, creative people here a number of times that they should never feel trapped, they should never feel like there is anything that they can't do. If they get exciting ideas, we should at least talk about them. There seems to be this perception lingering from years and years back that there's some sort of rules or some sort of powers that be who object to making changes in the characters of for that matter, doing anything good. And it's just not true—it's ridiculous. It's nonsense, and I told them if they come up with some kind of wild, new idea or exciting new concept and it involves a change in character or a major change in a title, that they should not be afraid to propose it, that there is no rule or force that will prevent it. The mysterious "They" who couldn't let them do things, does not exist. And all we have to do is do it. And I think you can see in the titles down the line here that that's exactly what's going to happen. Read John Byrne's **Fantastic Four**, Frank Miller's **Daredevil**, or any one of a number of books, you can see the reflection of the kind of creative freedom and the way we encourage people to go for it and to do exciting things. So that concept didn't appeal to Doug and he went elsewhere."

Shooter then emphatically denied the gist of the Moench argument, **"I never told anyone to kill anyone. Not Tony Stark, not Don Blake, not anyone else."**

Shooter and Moench do not seem to agree and we can only speculate on what actually occured. It appears that Shooter had no intention of killing off the major characters of the Marvel Universe. What then could have led Moench to believe that he did? Is it possible that Moench heard rumors of the changes to take place in **Iron Man**, that Iron Man would temporarily not be Tony Stark, and assumed that it was permanent? Is it possible that Moench, in the heat of the moment, only remembered what Shooter stated as an alternative, killing off the existing cast of **Master of Kung Fu**, because that is what he feared the most, the ordered destruction of his beloved characters? Or is it something more?

We will probably never know the full truth of what occurred during the meeting between the creative head of Marvel Comics, Jim Shooter, and one of their best and most prolific writers, Doug Moench. All we can know for sure is that Moench has left Marvel for DC and that he will be writing all of the Batman titles, **Batman, Detective**, and **World's Finest**, as well as two issues of **Arion**, and a possible fill-in on "I, Vampire".

As for Shooter, perhaps his most telling argument is his simplest one. During the September Marvel Press Conference he asked everyone present a very simple question, if what Moench stated was true, "What did I have to gain?"

SIXTEEN NEW MARVEL TITLES FOR 1983

Marvel comics will produce sixteen new titles in 1983. These titles will cover a wide range of material including books about the martial arts, video games, truckers, funny animals, and of course, superheroes. Other titles will be added to the schedule as additional editorial teams are hired. Corrent plans call for at least two and possibly three new editorial teams. Three books have been cancelled. These are **Ghost Rider, Spider-Woman,** and the **Master of Kung Fu,** although **MOKF** may survive as a bi-monthly. Previously announced for cancellation after the twelfth issue is **Team America.**

Tom DeFalco, who will be relinquishing his editorial control over the **Fantastic Four** and **Marvel-Two-In-One,** will edit two new mini-series. Bill Mantlo and Rick Leonardi will be producing a series devoted to **Cloak and Dagger.** Ed Hannigan was previously announced as the penciller on this book but was replaced by Leonardi. DeFalco will also be writing several titles. **Machine Man,** to be pencilled by Herb Trimpe, **Red Sonja,** with Dave Simons on pencils and inks, and "Funny Animals", with Mary Severin as penciller, are his three new titles. The **Red Sonja** book will be printed on Baxter stock. "Funny Animals" is a working title for the new book which will be edited by Larry Hama. The book will present exact superhero analogs of popular characters in the Marvel Universe such as Peter Porker, The Spectacular Spider-Ham, Dare Duck or Duck Devil, Hulk Bunny, and Captain Americat. The Peter Porker character will have a pigified version of Aunt May and will have to deal with a porkine J. Jonah Jameson. Also featured in the book will be a series of short stories such as the Goose Rider series by Steve Miller.

Hama will also edit the **Mantis,** no relationship to the previous Avenger, which will be a martial arts book by Dennis O'Neil and an unspecified penciller.

Ralph Macchio will edit the new quarterly **Kull** series, a book which will feature a constantly changing creative team, as well as the **Wonder Man** mini-series, which will be written by David Micheline and pencilled by John Romita, Jr. and **US1,** a new book devoted to truckers. Described as being in the same vein as television's Movin' On, this book is being designed by Al Milgrom and no creative team has yet been chosen. **US1** is planned as a regular monthly series.

The Submariner will be a new mini-series by Marc DeMatteis and Bob Budiansky.

Louise Jones will be editing two mini-series based on members of the X-Men. Both books will be written by

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Chris ClaRemont with one featuring Nightcrawler and the other centered around Storm. Jones will also be in charge of the new bi-monthly series, **Crystar.** Mary Jo Duffy and Brett Blevine will handle the creative chores. The book will be fantasy with sword and sorcery overtones. The characters will be fantastic life-forms and absolutely no humans will be involved.

Mark Gruenwald will both write and pencil a new mini-series devoted to Hawkeye. John Byrne will do the same for a new monthly book featuring **Alpha Flight.**

Last and perhaps of least interest to the average comic book fan are **Blip, The Videogame Magazine,** and **Marvel Age,** the Marvel tout sheet. **Blip** will be a monthly, 32 page, comic-book sized publication which reviews the current game market, while providing tips on winning the most popular arcade and cartridge games. There will be an all-new Donkey Kong adventure in comics form. Steve Grant and Bob Camp will respectively write and illustrate the series. **Marvel Age** will be a 16-page combination of news, coming attractions, and interviews with writers and artists. Devoted entirely to covering Marvel Comics and produced by Marvel Comics most comic readers will approach this title with a certain amount of disbelief.

The trade-off for readers would seem to be **Cloak and Dagger, Machine Man, Submariner, Storm, Nightcrawler, Red Sonja, Kull, Mantis,** "Funny Animals", **Hawkeye, Wonder Man, Alpha Flight, US1, Crystar, Blip,** and **Marvel Age** in exchange for **Ghost Rider, Spider-Woman,** and **Master of Kung Fu.** And possibly we will get to keep MOKF as a bi-monthly.

Feature News Preview

ROUGH TIMES AHEAD FOR TONY STARK

Denny O'Neil discusses the new direction of Iron Man

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In the last few weeks rumors concerning the upcoming demise of various major Marvel characters have been widespread. Perhaps the tale with the largest grain of truth to it is the one which involves Iron Man. Rumor has it that Jim Shooter, the Editor-In-Chief at Marvel Comics, ordered the death of this classic character. Iron Man, one of Marvel's earliest stalwarts and a founding member of the Avengers, was supposedly marked for death. There is some truth to that buried within the larger and falser assumptions. Iron Man, as we know him, will indeed be dead for at least a period of time. The series will undergo major changes that will affect the book for a minimum of one year, perhaps longer. In point of fact, the book may never be the same again.

The wheels for these changes were set in motion by one of Jim Shooter's many talks with the various writers and editors of Marvel who work under his supervision. It seems that Shooter appreciates major new directions in characters and startling developments in the plotlines of his comics. The changes should be interesting, make sense in terms of the book, and be designed to break up the boredom which can otherwise set in on a long-running series. As Shooter relates, "I've explained to the editorial and creative people here that they should never feel trapped, they should never feel like there is anything that they can't do. If they get exciting ideas, we should at least talk about them. There seems to be this perception, lingering from years and years back, that there's some sort of rules or some sort of powers that be who object to making changes in the characters or for that matter, doing anything good. And it's just not true—it's ridiculous. It's nonsense, and I told them if they come up with some kind of wild, new idea or exciting, new concept and it involves a change in character or a major change in a title, that they should not be afraid to propose it."

Some of the writers at Marvel have taken Shooter up on this new freedom. One of those writers, who also serves as a Marvel Editor, is Denny O'Neil. **Comic Feature's** Mike Harris talked to O'Neil about the major revisions he plans for **Iron Man**, a title he writes.

"I'm not absolutely certain how it's going to go. We are doing a series of stories in which his [Tony Stark's] alcoholism becomes acute. And we'll have some of the consequences that alcoholism has in real life—loss of status, loss of income, loss of friends, self respect, dignity. Ultimately we'll do a story about his rehabilitation but as it's now planned, the story of his disintegration will take at least a year."

How will this affect the Iron Man character? "If we do this realistically, we can't have this guy functioning as Iron Man so there will be a change in that status too. I'm not being coy, I just don't know exactly what that change will be. I suspect that somebody else will wear the suit for a few issues." This then is the basis for the rumor as this will certainly result in the at least temporary demise of the character as we know him. As Marvel Assistant Direct Sales Manager Peter David put it, "if he's too drunk to drive a car, he's too drunk to be a superhero."

After a period of about one year Tony Stark will, more or less, return to normal and "have one of those instantaneous cures. It is my feeling that when you're writing about stuff that's real, you should handle it realistically. I've realized, since I've been over this route before, that there are a lot of risks in mixing fantasy with reality, but as long as it was established—and I might add well established by David Micheline—he has this problem, I feel it is valid for me to tackle it again," concluded O'Neil.

With fandom clamoring for different and interesting treatments of characters this should certainly fill the bill. It is questionable that anyone will ever be able to view the Iron Man character in the same way again. The suit of armor places an incredible amount of raw power in the hands of a potentially unstable man, a man who will have lost control of himself on at least two different occassions in his recent life. Tony Stark, who began his career as a superhero as one of the most powerful characters in comics in both his identity as Iron Man and in his personal life as a genius inventor and head of the massive conglomerate Stark Enterprises, is now one of the weakest and least dependable heroes in comics.

MARVEL NEWS TIDBITS

In the **New Mutants #2** the new team battles the Sentinels.

Possession by a sleezoid and a major life change await Professor X in **X-Men** #167.

A LIFE GROWS WITHIN ME, AN EGG IMPLANTED BY THE MOTHER QUEEN OF THE BROOD. IT HAS JOINED ITS ESSENCE TO MINE. IT SPREADS THROUGH ME BODY AND SOUL, LIKE SOME LOATHSOME DISEASE, CORRUPTING EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES, RESHAPING ME IN ITS OWN IMAGE.
IF UNCHECKED, IT WILL CONSUME ME. I WILL DIE. IT WILL LIVE IN MY PLACE.
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Unus the untouchable appears in **Powerman/Iron Fist** #91.

Iron Man guest stars in **Marvel Two-In-One** #97. The watcher guest stars in **Marvel Team-Up** #127.

Machine Man puts in an appearance in **Iron Man** #168.

Marvel Fanfare #7 pits the Hulk against the Blob and Unus, the Untouchable, in a story written by Steven Grant, pencilled by Joe Barney and inked by George Freeman.

Indiana Jones #2 will ship 10/12, **X-Men Special Editon** will ship 10/12, **Bizarre Adventures** #34 will ship 11/16, **Star Slammers** [Graphic Marvel #5] will ship 11/8, **The New Mutants** #1 will ship 11/2, **Dreadstar** #1 is complete and will ship on schedule and **Coyote** #1 is tentatively scheduled for February 1983.

Ghost Rider #97 will contain the never-before revealed origin of the demon which dwells within John Blaze.

Werewolf by Night returns in **Moonknight** #29.

According to scripter Kurt Busiek, both Chemistro and Rand Meachum will return to the pages of **Powerman/Iron Fist**.

Team America will be suspended after issue #12! The book will be revived after major revisions. Issue #11 will guest star the Ghost Rider.

In 1983, one issue of **Spiderman** will be printed in reverse. A special Spiderman mirror will be tied in with the book!

Jim Shooter announced that negotiations have been entered with Will Eisner to produce a Spiderman/Spirit meeting. The Spiderman portion of the book will be produced by Stan Lee and John Romita while Will Eisner will handle his own character. There is some questions as to how seriously Eisner is taking this proposal.

Several developments have taken place within the realm of the Fantastic Four. Susan Storm will become pregnant again. The Thing will receive his own book which will begin with a new numbering, while **Marvel-Two-In-One** will be cancelled with issue #100.

No new creative teams have been chosen for **Daredevil, Moonknight,** or the **Master of Kung Fu.** Klaus Janson will continue on as the Daredevil artist while Larry Hama, Archie Goodwin, and Alan Brennert will write issues of the book - Issue #192, the first non-Miller issue, is written by Brennert and co-features Daredevil and the Black Widow.

Team America #10 is pencilled by Alan Kopperberg, inked by Vince Colletta, and written by Steven Grant.

Fantastic Four #252 - 255 will be printed sideways-cover, logo, and all. These are the issues which take place inside of the Negative Zone and Marvel has decided to experiment by setting them apart in this unique format.

Direct sales copies of the **Marvel Universe** series will not bear a UPC code so that upon completion, the entire series can be gathered into a collage. 10 copies will bear the code.

Spider-Woman battles **Tigra** in **Spider-Woman #49**.

Marvel-Two-In-One #96 teams The Thing with Franklin Richards, as only Franklin's expertise in video games can save an alien race from destruction.

Obnoxip vs. The X-Men is a new, Marvel one-shot shipping December 14.

Marvel Tales #150 will reprint **Spiderman Annual #1**. This issue almost made it to Baxter stock but not quite and will be released in the normal format.

Powerman/Iron Fist #92 begins a storyline involving fabled K'un Lun.

What If #38 presents a meeting between Thor and Conan. This unusual book is written by Alan Zelenetz, pencilled by Ron Wilson, and inked by Sam DeLaRosa.

December will see the release of two new Marvel titles, **Marvel Age** and **Blip** [see separate story].

Marvel Team-Up #128 features a photographic cover of models dressed as issue co-stars Captain America and Spider-Man special feature in the issue demonstrates how this type of cover is created.

Four movie adaptations are currently scheduled for 1983 release: Krull, Revenge of the Jedi, Fire and Ice, and Star Trek III. **Revenge of the Jedi** will first appear in May in a Super Special format (Baxter paper, 64 pages, $2.50 cover price and either 8½ x 11 or regular comic book size, the latter not yet determined). It will then be reprinted as a four-part mini-series in regular comic book format, in June, July, August and September. Mary Jo Duffy edits, Archie Goodwin scripts, Al Williamson pencils, and Carlos Garzon inks. This material will NOT appear in the regular **Star Wars** series.

EPIC NEWS

The line up for **Epic Illustrated #16** has been announced and it seems pretty interesting. Known to Marvel staffers as the "Barry Smith" issue, the book sports a beautiful cover by Smith. Also included by Smith are, "The Beguiling", an eight page color story, "Attack of the Stars", a two page black-and-white piece, and "The Horde", a text story with illustrations. Dave Sims, of **Cerebus the Aardvark** fame, contributes a satirical barbarian. Dennis O'Neil, Carl Potts, and Terry Austin have created an additional Last of the Dragons installment entitled "The Vision", not to be confused with the Marvel character of the same name currently sharing a mini-series with his wife and fellow superheroine, The Scarlet Witch. A new Jack the Thief story, "Two Sisters", by Charles Vess will also appear. "The Woman Who Loved the Stars", a short story originally written by Elizabeth Lynn, and adapted to comics form by Trina Robbins, will round out the issue.

Already announced for issue number seventeen are two previously announced pieces, respectively the work of Pepe Moreno and Go Nagai. The Moreno piece is entitled "Generation Zero", while the Nagai piece is a ten page black-and-white story called "Oni". The issue will also include "Arise Awake", a new story by Mark Hempel.

In other Epic news, Archie Goodwin and Mike Kaluta have completed a ten page story. Kaluta is working solo on another as-yet-uncompleted piece. Mary Jo Duffy and Kent Williams have completed a seven page story featuring their new character Tailgunner. Finally, it appears that only the coloring remains to be completed on the previously announced Killraven piece.

Over at **Epic Comics**, Mary Jo Duffy has guaranteed that **Dreadstar** will appear right on schedule. The book is Jim Starlin's new bi-monthly continuation of his epic series, which has previously appeared as two graphic novels by two different publishers and a series of installments in **Epic Illustrated**. After the many delays in previously announced special projects, Duffy apparently found it necessary to reassure the buying public that at least this series would be on schedule since the first issue is already in the hands of the printer (and presumably you should have read it by the time that you read this). **Coyote**, the series by Englehart and Leialoha will be released no earlier than next February.

DC NEWS TIDBITS

At least two DC/Marvel teamups are planned for 1983. The two announced pairings are the second **X-Men/ Teen Titans**, this one produced by DC, and a JLA/Avengers.

Adventure Comics Digest #497 will contain the following line up. Leading off is the concluding installment of the five-part origin of the Challengers of the Unknown by Bob Rezakis, Alex Toth, and Frank Giacoia. Also appearing will be "The Box with Ultra Powers; Ultra Boys origin story from **Superboy** #98, and "The Face Behind the Lead Mask" from **Adventure Comics** #300. Rounding out the issue are stories from **Aquaman** and **Shazam**. The front cover is by Gil Kane, the back cover by Paris Cullins and Giacoia.

Best of DC Digest #14 is a special Metal Men issue featuring the first Chemo story from **Showcase** #39 and "The Flaming Doom" from **Showcase** #37 - 38.

Both Air Waves and Superboy co-star with Superman in **DC Presents** #55. The story is by Bob Rezakis and Alex Saviuk.

Valda is blinded in **Arak** #19.

DC plans yet another new direction for **Wonder Woman** beginning with issue #301. Plans are to explore the mythological lore of the Princess of Paradise Island, under new writer Dan Mishkin.

The Squid returns in Batman #357. The cover is by Ed Hannigan and Dick Giordano. The story concludes in **Detective** #524.

All-Star Squadron #19 marks the return of the Justice Society of America.

Teen Titans #29 features the return of the Brotherhood of Evil.

Terra will become the newest Titan in **Teen Titans #30**.

A new storyline, centering on The Atom, begins in **Justice League #213**.

DC Presents #56 teams the Man of Steel with Power Girl.

The Best of DC Digest #35 is the "Best-of-the-Year" issue and features the Teen Titans in "Dear Mom and Dad," the Legion in "Old Friends, New Relatives, and Othe Corpses", Batman in "Haven!", Firestorm in "Plastique Is Another Word for Fear", I, Vampire in "Manhattan Interlude," Superman and Clark Kent in "When You Wish Upon a Planetoid", and Sgt. Rock in "Keep Me Alive!".

Brave and the Bold #197 presents "The Autobiography of Bruce Wayne", the story of the Earth-2 Batman.

Lois Lane leaves Superman in **Action Comics #542**. This issue marks a major change in the life of Superman as major cast leaves and new cast joins.

Firestorm #10 begins a three-part story featuring the attack of Hyena. Pat Broderick returns to pencil this book ending his brief hiatus.

During the mid-seventies, Robert Kanigher and Joe Kubert created a character which became a short-lived cult classic, Ragmen. **Brave and the Bold** #196 reunites Kanigher with his character as he and artist Jim Aparo team Ragmen with Batman.

Night Force #8 begins a totally new novel. The first group of issues form a separate and complete graphic novel. This new novel is set in an urban environment and concerns a haunted house. The creative line-up remains Marv Wolfman, Gene Colan, and Bob Smith.

The "Tales of the Green Lantern Corps" in **Green Lantern** #162 is by former CF Co-Editor Eichard Howell and former CF News Editor Kurt Busiek.

Action #541 concludes the current story line of the split Superman in a full length story by Marv Wolfman and Gil Kane. DC promises that the following issue will begin "a series of upheavals and big changes in the life of the Man of Steel.

January will see the release of the first issue of a four issue Deadman mini-series. Dan Mishkin and Gary Cohn will write, Trevor Von Eeden will provide the art.

Gem World will finally premiere in February.

"Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld" will make a preview appearance as an insert in **The Legion of Superheroes #298**. The creative team will be Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn, and Ernie Colon.

Feature News Preview

SIMONSON'S STARSLAMMERS

TO BE MARVEL'S FIFTH GRAPHIC NOVEL

Walt Simonson talks about his creation—its initial series, the Graphic Novel, and future plans.

On November 8, Marvel Comics will release their first graphic novel not based on the continuation of existing characters. The first four novels were either the further, or concluding, adventures of mainstays of the Marvel Universe—Captain Marvel and the **X-Men**—or protagonists who had at least made a brief appearance—Elric in **Conan** and the Dreadstar cast in **Epic Illustrated**. This novel will feature a new [to Marvel] creation written, pencilled, and inked by Walt Simonson. **Comic Feature's** Mike Harris talked to Simonson about his new book.

© 1982 Walt Simonson

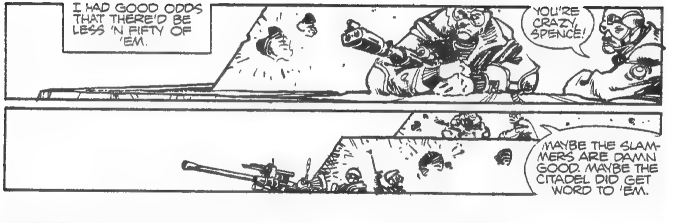
Marvel Comics' fifth graphic novel may seem familier to a very small group of readers, but for a simple reason. **Starslammers**, Walt Simonson's addition to the graphic novel line, is based on a concept that was begun thirteen years ago! The original series developed out of a part of a promotional package that was produced by the Washington Science-Fiction Association [WSFA].

"They were bidding on a World-Con at the time," Simonson said, "which would take place in 1974. At the time, I was a member of the club. I was doing drawings [for them]. I had done some covers for their in-house publication, and I put together the idea for the Starslammers which would be published as one-page flyers that would come out over a period of a couple of years, and the basic theme of which was to promote the idea of [Washington] D.C.'s '74 bid."

[Note—the location of a World Science Fiction Convention is determined by a vote.] After the Starslammers' initial appearance in the flyers, the format evolved into a series of episodes of between five and seven pages each, with a double-length final installment. There were seven of these installments, the last of which appeared in 1972, just before the vote on Washington's World-Con bid. It was perfect timing, according to Walt. "We did get the World-Con. I don't know if the Starslammers had anything to do with it, but the bid was successful."

Exactly what are the Starslammers? According to Walt, they "basically are mercenaries ... there's a whole planet full of them. They go around and do whatever it is that mercenaries do."

Those of you who missed the first run, need not worry. The Graphic Novel's plot does not depend on the previous story. In fact, it's quite the opposite. "The graphic novel that I'm doing now for Marvel is really something in the nature of an origin story." Simonson


I HAD GOOD ODDS THAT THERE'D BE LESS 'N FIFTY OF 'EM.
YOU'RE CRAZY, SPENCE!
MAYBE THE SLAMMERS ARE DAMN GOOD. MAYBE THE CITADEL DID GET WORD TO 'EM.

says, "it tells us who they are and how they came to be. In the original, the existence of the Starslammers was a given. Presumably, that story would have taken place at least a couple of hundred years, maybe longer, after the story that I'm telling now. Sort of what I'm doing is creating a universe in which I can tell stories in different times and places with sort of a common 'cosmic' background." "What I'm doing now is using concepts and ideas that were developed back then. There are no continuing characters as such, there weren't any real characters in the original strip. I sort of had the view of the Starslammers as army ants, at that time. I've since given them somewhat more human faces, but the characterization wasn't a major part of that particular strip."

Those of you who want to try to obtain a complete set of the original run may be very disappointed. According to Walt, "The original Starslammers were printed on an offset press in somebody's basement on legal-size paper that had been turned sideways and folded in half. Every so often, at a con, I will run into somebody who's got a couple of them." Still, complete sets are not unheard of. "Everybody that I knew in '72, when I came to New York, has a set. Actually, the Starslammers were my original portfolio that got me work in comic books. It was also my degree project for art school." So, except for a lucky few, fans will have to wait for the release of the graphic novel for their first taste of the Starslammers. If that catches on, there is the possibility that Simonson will reprint the first series. Walt still has all of the original art, and had been toying with the idea for a while. "I've given it some thought," He said, "and it's possible. The early stuff is very crude. What I really liked about it was that the whole thing was done over a two-year period, and I don't think that I have undergone anywhere near that amount of a change in a similar amount of time, learning so much. The later stuff was the work that got me work. I'd be happy to publish it in some format, probably in black and white, but if the Starslammers graphic novel sinks without a trace, then I probably won't do it. [Laughs] But we shall see. It is a possibility. I've had a couple of people approach me about this."

After the graphic novel, the Starslammers are slated to appear in **Heavy Metal**. This story, which has already been bought by **Heavy Metal**, will be eighteen pages long and broken into two parts. According to Simonson, "It involves just one of the Starslammers, basically, and it doesn't take place on their homeworld. It takes place hundreds of years after the story that I'm doing for Marvel." The story is going to be in black and white.

The graphic novel will be in full color, reproduced from the colored stats, not hand separated. At the moment, the book's two principle colorists are Louise Jones [Walt's wife, who also helped color the **Alien** adaptation], and Debra Pedler. "There may be more colorists as we get desperate, but right now, those two are committed to doing the coloring."

Simonson says that crossovers with the rest of the Marvel universe are not very likely. "In one sense, for sales, that would probably be fine, but in another sense, trying to keep the continuity straight would probably be more than I could handle. I wouldn't be able to satisfy anybody if I did that."

As to whether or not the Starslammers are superheroes in the conventional sense, Walt remains ambiguous. "I see them as the protagonists of the story. In a sense, I would like to go somewhere else than to make them specifically heroic or anti-heroic ... They do some heroic stuff, but sometimes they don't. Mostly, in this story, they do heroic stuff."

Given such unusual protagonists, one would normally expect a certain amount of concern on the part of the editors. Surprisingly, this has not been the case. Part of the reason for this may be due to the editor of the book being Archie Goodwin, who is certainly one of the better editors in the industry, and an old collaborator of Simonson's. Walt Simonson and Archie Goodwin co-created the very popular **Manhunter** series for DC Comics. When asked about his relationship with the editor, Simonson was very positive. "Free reign has been the least of my problems. [Laughs] Archie's been real good about that. We've gone over stuff, and he's had a number of extremely valuable suggestions on how I can get myself out of various scrapes that I've written myself into. You can't ask for better than that as far as an editor is concerned. Some of the things that have happened [in the book] are a direct result of suggestions that he and Mary Jo [duffy] had made ... We've arrived at a plot that works much better than anything that I put together originally."

Work from the original STARSLAMMERS series by Walt Simonson.

I AM RUTHVEN SCHEYTT, PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE SENATE! WHY HAVE YOU CALLED A TRUCE? IS YOUR JOB FINISHED OR DO YOU WISH TO SURRENDER?
WE CAN SPARE THE SARCASM, THIS IS THE COMMANDER OF THE STAR SLAMMERS! WE HAVE ONLY JUST DISCOVERED THAT OUR EMPLOYER HAS BETRAYED US!
A REPRIEVE FOR THE REMAINDER OF YOUR CITY, MS. PRESIDENT!
REGRETABLE BUT UNAVOIDABLE. SHALL WE SAY, STANDARD PENSIONS FOR ALL SURVIVORS?
AND THAT'S THE END OF IT?
IT IS. IF YOU WISH PROTECTION WHILE YOU'RE RE-BUILDING, WE'LL PROVIDE THAT AS WELL.
SO ALL WILL BE AS IT WAS. WE'LL CONSIDER THE OFFER OF PROTECTION. THE OTHERS ARE ACCEPTABLE.
WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE RESTITUTION OF SIX MILLION FOR THE PROPERTY ALREADY LOST, AND A COPY OF THE CONTRACT THAT BROUGHT US HERE ORIGINALLY!
WHAT ABOUT THE DEAD?
THEN FAREWELL. A PROPER DIPLOMATIC MISSION WILL BE SENT TO EARTH SHORTLY.

People In The News

Alan Zelenetz, Bob Hall, and Vince Aletta are officially the new creative team on **Thor** as of **#330**.

Zelenetz and newcomer William Johnson will take over the chores on **Master of Kung Fu #123**.

Terry Austin pencils **Dr. Strange #58**.

Kurt Busiek will write at least six **Powerman/Iron Fist** beginning with issue #91.

Doug Moench's last **Moon Knight** is issue #30 while he leaves **Master of Kung Fu** after issue #122. Moench will be writing both **Batman** and **Detective** for DC. Gene Day leaves the **Master of Kung Fu** with issue #120. He replaces John Byrne on **Indiana Jones.**

Bill Sienkiewicz's last issue of **Moon Knight** will either be #30 or #31.

Mark Bright pencils Dazzler #25. Kent Gamble inks.

Kevin Deuban inked issue #78 of **Ghost Rider.**

Alan Zelenetz is the new writer, at least temporarily, on **Master of Kung Fu.**

As of #58, Dan Green is the new penciller on **Dr. Strange.**

The **1983 FF Annual** will be by John Byrne.

Jerry Ordway takes over as penciller with **All-Star Squadron** #19. He will also continue as inker.

Gene Day, the former artist of **Master of Kung Fu** and other books has died. Details are not yet clear. This fresh, young Canadian brought an attractive, although different, art style to the books he did. He will be missed.

Alternative News

Pacific Comics has announced two additional new titles. **Alien Worlds** is a new science fiction anthology edited by Bruce Jones. Printed on Baxter stock, the book will be released during alternate months from **Twisted Tales** their horror anthology title. The first issue features work by Al Williamson, Val Mayerik, Nestor Redonda and Tim Conrad. The cover of this thirty-two page book is by Joe Chiodo.

The other title will be by Scott Shaw! Entitled **Wild Animals** the line-up for the first issue of this book includes Shaw!, Aragones, Gonick, Geary, Engel, Erling, and Varelle. This may not be a continuing title.

Pacific has scheduled its revamped **Spiderman Index** for November release. The book will be greatly expanded over the first edition, squarebound, and released in both hardcover at $12.95, and softcover, at $8.95, formats.

Jeremy Broad, the new graphic novel by Jan Strand and Rich Corben, is scheduled for November.

New Media Publishing has released the first issue of **The Golden Age of Comics**. The second issue will contain a massive section on Will Eisner including a previously unreprinted "Spirit" story. Also included is a reprinted "Rover" story from **Animal Comics** by Dan Noonan and a "Captain Venture" story from **Planet Comics**. Dick Lupoff contributed an article on Mr. Scarlet.

The Best of the RBCC is finally at the printers and planned for immediate release.

Hal Blevins and the Bookie Parlor have announced the severing of all ties with Pat Gabriele, the artist with whom they were to publish **Uncanny Tales of the Forbidden Book**. This would appear to mark the end of Elder Comics and all subscription monies have been returned.

© 1982 First Comics

First Comics' **Warp Special** will be written by Peter Gillis, pencilled by Gene Day, while inks are by George Freeman. The special presents the origin of Chaos, Prince of Madness, one of the most significant characters in the warp universe. The origin story will run 23 pages with as-yet-unannounced back up story filling out the issue. Thirty-two pages on mandon stock, retailing at $11.00, the book is planned for March 1983 release.

E-Men, Michael Mauser, and Nova Kane fight the Brain in the first issue of **E-Man**. The story, entitled "E-M Phone Home," is by Marty Paska and Joe Staton.

Rick Geary has released a series of postcards and a poster. The artist is best known for his work in **National Lampoon.**

AMERICOMICS

AmeriComics has announced their new publishing plans. A sister company of **Paragon Publications**, the new company according to Publisher Bill Black, will publish a line of full color comics with print runs of 20,000 to 30,000 copies. The books will be on Baxter stock and, unlike other publishers utilizing that stock, printed at World Color Press in Sparta.

The first title will be **AmeriComics** and will feature a different protagonist each issue. The Shade, The Messenger, The Phantom Lady, Captain Freedom, Soldier of Fortune, Bolt, Astron, and various characters of Charlton Comics. Cover artists will include Gil Kane, George Perez, Pat Broderick, Bob McLeod, and Jerry Ordway.

The second title will be the **Black Diamond**, featuring a female protagonist. Paul Gulacy is the cover artist for this series.

©1982 Gerber & Kirby

Eclipse has signed up two interesting additions to their group of creators. Jerry Siegel, the co-creator of Superman, is working with artist Val Mayerik on a new series, while Frank Miller will be doing a series of pin ups of famous fictional detectives. The Siegel series will be run in eight-page installments as the back-up featured in **Destroyer Duck**, beginning in issue number two. "The Starling" stars an alien, The Glowing Man, who comes to Earth with powers and abilities beyond those of normal men. Mike Hammer, Sam Spade, and Philip Marlowe will be the first three of Miller's pin ups to appear as a two-page centerspread in **Thrilling Detective Stories**.

© 1982 Collins & Beatty

RED CIRCLE's flagship book THE MIGHTY CRUSADERS will debut in **November 1982.**

The 32-page color comic will be printed on special **white stock**, with a **one dollar** price tag. Aimed at the collector market, according to Editor-In-Chief **Richard Goldwater**, the story and art will be handled by former D.C. and Marvel artist **Rich Buckler.** Buckler, along with Managing Editor **John Carbonaro**, will also edit several titles for **Red Circle**, among which are **THE SHIELD, THE FLY, WEB,** and **BLACK HOOD**, all bi-monthly color books.

A **HANGMAN SPECIAL** [black & white, magazine format] is also in the planning stages. Release dates and artist/writer line-up on these books will be forthcoming.

Dark Age is a new magazine devoted to fantasy art. The first issue includes work by Fabian, Wood, Wrightson, Druillet, Redondo, Severin, Jones, Chaykin, Fitzpatrick, G. Barr, Caldwell, Nino, Kaluta, Crandall, and Bode.

Spectrum Comics Previews #1, still another new title, will preview "The Survivors".

With issue eleven **Rip Off Comix** becomes **Rip Off** and expands its overall presentation. The new size will be 8" X 10½" and seventy-two pages in length. The Freak Brothers series will begin to feature full-color.

First Comics has announced the Howard Chaykin will be pencilling **Warp Special #1**, replacing the late Gene Day.

Animation News

© 1982 Walt Disney

DISNEY CABLE PROBLEMS

During the month of September, the ten month old, one hundred million dollar cable television joint venture between Walt Disney Productions and Westinghouse's Group W Satellite Communications collapsed. Disney becomes sole owner of the Disney Channel, a proposed 18 hour a day family oriented pay-TV network. With much hype the proposed service was announced November 1981. [In fact, in December of that same year, a cable industry convention in Anaheim took over Disneyland's Main Street for an evening that featured a stage show describing the new deal and the first champagne anyone can remember being served in that Magic Kingdom.] Disney was probably the most eagerly awaited of any cable-TV network announced or launched within the past few years with local cable operators quickly signing up. The major cause of the collapse was Disney's disenchantment with the Group W's wishes for program content. Group W wanted more reruns from Disney's commercial TV programs and less emphasis on EPCOT. Disney originally went into the deal hoping that it would be a showcase to spotlight EPCOT, much like the original **Disneyland** TV show spotlighted the first Magic Kingdom. Interestingly, Disney and Group W never signed a contract. There was only a letter of intent, a preliminary agreement. When the collapse was first announced, Group W still planned to distribute the Disney Channel for the Disney organization but even that has fallen through and the latest press announcement has Group W preparing to sell Disney their two valuable satellite channels for about 26 million dollars. Will this finally end all the mousing around and will Disney be prepared to launch the channel in April 1983? No one knows at this time but several independent animators are still hard at work on some segments for the new Disney channel.

SPEED BUGGY BEATS THE GENERAL LEE

When Tom Wopat and John Schneider quite the **DUKES OF HAZZARD** tv show over a financial dispute it also affected Saturday morning tv. CBS was planning for Hanna-Barbera Productions to produce a Dukes Saturday morning cartoon. "The Dukes" was to have featured characters from the prime time series with the original actors' voices. At the last minute, CBS had to substitute reruns of "Speed Buggy", a Hanna-Barbera cartoon series from the early 70s. "The Dukes" is not dead yet. CBS says the series is still planned but whether it will utilize the characters and the voices supplied by Wopat and Schneider or whether they'll use the prime time replacements or whether they'll hire other voice actors to do Bo and Luke Duke is still undecided at this time.

THE FLIGHT OF DRAGONS

This Fall should bring a new animated TV special from Rankin/Bass. Based on the popular book by Peter Dickinson, **The Flight of Dragons** the story follows the adventures of three wizards as they try to rid the world of the evil Red Wizard who is master of the devil's domain and who wants mankind to destroy itself with its own science so the world will be free for magic once again. Early in 1983, Rankin/Bass will release another special. Based on the children's classic **The Wind In The Willows**, the animated special will boast voice work by Charles Nelson Reilly, Roddy McDowall, Jose Ferrer and Eddie Bracken.

NEW BLUTH FEATURE

Don Bluth Productions have started work on their next animated feature, **East of the Sun, West of the Moon**. It is a science fiction adventure with human characters that travel in space and to the underwater city of Atlantis. Obviously concerned about the criticism that **Secret of NIMH** was weak in the story department, the company has hired famed screenwriter Robert Towne to story edit the new feature. Towne, who has written many well known films such as **Shampoo,** saw **NIMH** and spent almost two weeks trying to find the company because he had written a script for an animated feature and felt Bluth Productions would be the company that could handle it. Bluth Productions liked the script stating that it was something really special as opposed to other scripts that had been submitted to the company which resembled TV specials. While preproduction work starts on Towne's script, Towne will be helping with the science fiction animated feature already underway. In connection with these new plans, Bluth Productions has made plans to start an animation newsletter. The newsletter will feature interviews with staff members, behind the scenes information, never before published animation artwork and other surprises. To get on the mailing list to receive the first free issue of the Bluth Bulletin, send your name and address to Bluth Bulletin, C/O Jerry Beck, 14 Horatio St., Apt. 8-C, New York, New York 10014. By the way, Towne wasn't the only one impressed by Bluth Productions' first feature. A well known female singer contacted Bluth after having seen the film and the Production company is trying to write in a part for this lady in their next animated feature.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES: TRON VS. NIMH

There is a lot of activity surrounding Don Bluth Productions after the release of **The Secret of NIMH.** Jerry Haile, a film buyer, booked **NIMH** and **Tron** as a double feature for a small theater in Tujunga, California, thinking that it would be a terrific pairing. Two days before the double bill opened, Haile got a call from a Disney salesperson who told Haile that the two films could not run together and that Disney would pull **Tron** rather than let it run with **NIMH**. Film buyers for other theaters were also notified of this fact by Disney. Haile demanded an explanation and was referred to the Disney contract that states "the distributor has a right to cancel the contract if the motion picture, trailer or other material to be exhibited on the same program is found to be of unsuitable character." Why was it unsuitable? Disney spokesman Dick Cook stated that he didn't want **NIMH** to be thought of as a Disney product, that Disney prefers the second feature to either be a Disney film or a film that was "commercially successful". No mention was made of the fact that **NIMH** was made by several ex-Disney animators who left Disney amidst a lot of publicity about their dissatisfaction with the way things were at the Studio. Don Bluth stated that his lawyers were looking into possible legal action against Disney for its ban on **NIMH**. However, **NIMH** distributor MGM/UA has stated publicly that if Disney doesn't want its film shown with **NIMH** because it was made by a former employee, it's OK with UA.

"**NIMH** was never a vendetta or a personal statement against Disney", stated Bluth, "If anything, I would hope the competition would make them take their jobs more seriously. There is a responsibility for Disney to make the legacy of its animation continue to exist."

BITS AND PIECES

The Bluth Bulletin, a bi-monthly animation newsletter edited by animation historian Jerry Beck, has been delayed due to some recent financial problems at the Bluth Studios. One of the major backers of the studio's current project withdrew its support when the animators went on strike. The studio still intends to print the animation newsletter but it will be indefinitely postponed while other matters of more importance are handled .... This year's winner of the **Emmy** award for best animated program was ABC's "The Grinch Grinches the Cat in the Hat" .... **Fritz the Cat** and **Heavy Traffic**, two animated features by Ralph Bakshi are to be released on videocassette by Warners. Warners states they are the first X-rated titles released by the firm ... The new Buena Vista Palace Hotel that will open April 1983, at Walt Disney World will feature over 1,000 Mickey Mouse push button phones for the rooms. That's one of each double-bedded room, and two for those equipped with a king-size mattress. One goes on each side of the big bed .... There is an **Osamu Tezuka Fan Club** with such features as a bi-monthly Tezuka fan magazine. Interested readers should send a s.a.s.e. to Stephen Weelder, P.O. Box 565, Somerville, New Jersey 08876.

Latest word is that Friz Freleng is still with Warner Brothers and has not gone over to Hanna-Barbera although that offer of a job as a consultant is still open and will remain open for a long while. Current rumor in the L.A. area is that Warner Brothers is trying to buy back the rights to its pre-1948 cartoons that it sold to TV distributor A.A.P..... Ralph Bakshi has stated that his upcoming film, **Fire and Ice**, would be his last film in the "rotoscope" cycle. He wasn't sure what he would be doing next but felt that he needed at least a year's rest after producing so many films in so short a time. Bakshi's **Hey Good Lookin'** is expected to be finally released by Warners with an ad campaign designed to play it up as "an animated **Porky's**"..... The Walt Disney television show on CBS will feature six episodes each of two new series that could ultimately be spun off into their own series. **Tales of the Apple Dumpling Gang** will be based on the Disney movie **The Apple Dumpling Gang** and will be set in the old West with Berry Van Dyke as a young gambler who wins two children in a poker game. **Small and Frye** concerns two detectives, one of whom is able to shrink to six inches in height. Darren McGavin is in this one.....ASIFA-Hollywood is planning an "Olympiad of Animation" to coincide with the 1984 Olympic Games. It is proposed that each country participating in the 1984 Olympics make an animated film on any aspect of the Olympics or sports. In addition, the group hopes to screen a program of animated shorts that each country considers its best film... .....Warner Books turned down the opportunity to produce an illustrated version of **The Warner Brothers Cartoons** by Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald despite its success in an unillustrated edition from Scarecrow Press. Warners felt the cost of illustrations would have been too much; it's the same reason it turned down a similar book by Mike Barrier.

STRIP NEWS

LIEUTENANT, SEE IF YOU CAN CONTACT THOSE MERCHANT CAPTAINS.
I GOT ONE OF THEM, SIR BUT UMM...
WELL, WHAT IS IT?
SIR, THEIR ONLY REPLY WAS UMM BUTT OUT.
SHIGETANI 7-9

CHANGES

STAR TREK—the Comic Strip is now in the hands of a new creator: Padraic Shigetani, who replaces DiVono and Harris. Amazingly, the new art is even worse than the old, which was not of professional competence. It is too soon to tell whether or not the story will improve. I have on occasion tried telephoning the L. A. Times Syndicate for information about the strip, and they tell me that the strip has folded, this despite the fact that I have the current strips here in my hands. I have heard many horror stories about syndicate treatment of a strip, but never before have I heard of a syndicate which was under the impression that a still-running strip had been cancelled.

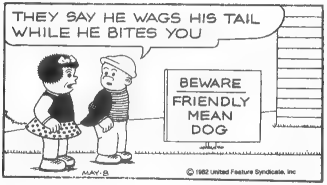
DOONESBURY—is going on vacation. Gary Trudeau will not be drawing new strips from the first of next year until the last quarter of 1984. Usually, when a cartoonist goes on vacation, he quietly hires a ghost to do the strip, but Trudeau's decision to announce his vacation on television and in the newsmagazines is probably a wiser course. People want what they cannot get, witness the boost a number of s-f writers have given their careers by announcing their retirement. I hope that Trudeau finds his 1984 comeback as easy as he anticipates. Whether the strip will be suspended or go to reprints until then is not clear.

WINNIE WINKLE—is no longer being drawn by the Joe Kubert School. The new artist is Frank Bolle, who has worked on many strips, including Best Seller Showcase and Encyclopedia Brown. Story is still by Reduta.

OBITUARY

Ernie Bushmiller died August 15, 1982. His comic strip, Nancy, was scorned by fans, but provided enjoyment to millions of readers and was one of the most popular strips. He won the Reuben Award for "Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year" in 1976.

Nancy will continue. The daily strip will be drawn by Mark Lasky and the Sunday Nancy will continue to be drawn by Al Plastino.



SARGENT PRESTON OF THE YUKON

A new story strip is in the works, starring the nephew of the original Sargent Preston, in new, modern day adventures. The strip will be drawn by Don Sherwood, whose Dan Ragg strip debuted to a lot of fanfare but was not a success. The script will be by Stan Stunell, a syndicate vice president. Yukon King will appear. Now that's one old dog.

THE PIRATE JUNKS, NAVIGATED BY EXPERTS, SLOWLY CLOSE IN ON TIERSEY, PAT AND CONNIE....
THEY'RE COMIN' CLOSER—AND I CAN'T GET A BIT MORE SPEED OUT O' THIS "SCOW!"
2-8

Noel Sickles, the man whom Milton Caniff calls his greatest inspiration, died October 3, 1982. Sickles, a heavy smoker, underwent exploratory surgery two weeks before his death. Finding inoperable cancer, they closed him and he returned to his beloved art boards to await the end.

THE MONTH IN COMICS

MARVEL

11/02 shipping

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #97—Written by DAVID MICHELINIE Pencils by RON WILSON. Inks by JON D'AGOSTINO The **Thing** teams with **Iron Man** in "Yesterdaze" as they take on the dreaded **Ted Silverberg,** the ex-TV executive who returns with the threat of Grade-B movies brought to horrific life

TEAM AMERICA #10—Written by STEVEN GRANT Pencils by ALAN KUPPERBERG Inks by VINCE COLLETTA Las Vegas and its citizens may become "Dust to Dust" unless the **Team** can prevent the evil **Ashe** and his cult from wiping out the entire gambling capital of the U.S.

KING CONAN #15—Written by DOUG MOENCH Pencils by MARC SYLVESTRI It begins with a tavern and a toss of a coin by **King Conan,** and it ends in a confrontation with the larcenous "Looters of Ri shann

DAZZLER #25—Written by STEVEN GRANT Pencils by MARC BRIGHT Inks by KENT GAMBLE **Dazzler** discovers that the latest love of her life is actually a deadly threat to herself and all those close to her!

KA-ZAR #24—Written by BRUCE JONES (who *definitely* knows) Pencils by BOB HALL (who *might* know) Inks by ARMANDO GIL (who isn't sure) The question in everyone's mind is whether the **jungle lord** is in fact, dead, or in the middle of a treacherous adventure in Casablanca. All **Shanna** knows for sure is that she is starting to crack up completely. Plus **Tales of Zabu,** Foto Funnies, and another smashing ARMANDO GIL cover

DAREDEVIL #192—Written by ALAN BRENNERT Pencilled by KLAUS JANSON It is **Daredevil** and the **Black Widow,** competing in a desperate race that neither can afford to win

11/09 shipping

CAPTAIN AMERICA #279—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS Pencils by MIKE ZECK Inks by JOHN BEATTY **Primus** has assumed the identity of **Steve Rogers,** and **Cap** finds himself in a bizarre struggle to save—himself! Plus a confrontation with a boyhood friend causes **Cap** to experience a dramatic turning point in his life. All this and **Bernie Rosenthal,** too, in a tale "Of Men and Monsters"

MICRONAUTS #51— Written by BILL MANTLO Pencils by BUTCH GUICE Inks by DAN BULANADI. "He Who Turns and Runs Away," but even that credo may not enable **Commander Rann** to live to fight another day as, still reeling from the death of several **Micronauts** *(in #50),* he must battle **Baron Karza.** Plus the return of **Acroyear's** lover-turned-foe, **Cilicia!**

GHOST RIDER #78—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS Pencils by BOB BUDIANSKY Inks by KEVIN DZUBAN An offbeat issue deserves an offbeat title: "Adrift on a Sea of Guilt in the Empire of Sleep." **Johnny Blaze** battles on two fronts as the **Freakmaster** attempts to destroy him physically while the **Ghost Rider** and **Nightmare** team to destroy his mind in the world of dreams. Not for the squeamish

INDIANA JONES #3—Written by DENNY O'NEIL Pencils by GENE DAY **Indy** stumbles into a lynch mob that leads him to an elixir of immortality and a man who's been alive since Elizabethan times

THOR #329—Pencils by ALAN KUPPERBERG Inks by JIM MOONEY The **Thunder God** battles to the finish with the diabolical **Doctor Demonicus.** Thou shalt not miss it!

11/18 shipping

INCREDIBLE HULK #281—Written by BILL MANTLO Pencils by SAL BUSCEMA Inks by JOE SINNOTT. Curtain up for "Audition" as the **Leader** tries a new plan of attack. Previously defeated by the savage **Hulk,** the **Leader** wonders if, with the intelligence of **Bruce Banner** now in control, the **Hulk** might be vanquished. The answer is a shocker

AVENGERS #229—Written by ROGER STERN Pencils by AL MILGROM. Inks by BRETT BREEDING The "Final Curtain" falls on the trial of **Henry Pym,** but it may be the **Masters of Evil** who render the final verdict. Also, we don't want to give anything away, but somebody dies

CONAN #144—Written by MARY JO DUFFY Pencils by JOHN BUSCEMA **Conan** is probably as good drunk as most men are sober, and this issue he gets to prove it as the besotted **Cimmerian** aids three beautiful sisters in a quest for a treasure that will restore them to their homeland

MARVEL TALES #149—Way back in **Spider-Man #12** it looked like the secret was out as the webhead was "Unmasked by Doctor Octopus." That old STAN LEE—STEVE DITKO magic at work again

© 1982 Marvel Comics

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #238—Written by ROGER STERN. Pencils by JOHN ROMITA, JR. In the tradition of the **Green Goblin, Spidey's** deadliest foe, we bring you the **Hobgoblin**, who will cast a "Shadow of Evils Past" on the **Wallcrawler** and company. This will begin a year-long saga that will culminate in #250, so stock up on this important issue.

X-MEN #167—Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Pencils by PAUL SMITH. Inks by BOB WIACEK. The **X-Men** return to earth, exhausted from their battle with the **Brood,** only to find that the last of that disgusting race has taken possession of **Charles Xavier!** Plus an unexpected development in the life of **Professor X** (as if becoming a **Sleazoid** weren't enough!)

ROM #40—Written by BILL MANTLO. Pencils by SAL BUSCEMA. Inks by IAN AKIN & BRIAN GARVEY. "The Piper of Peril" features the return of **Starshine** plus the introduction of—**The Dweller on the Threshold!**

POWER MAN/IRON FIST #91—Written by KURT BUSIEK. Pencils by DENYS COWAN. **Unus the Untouchable** has decided to give up the strain of world conquering and take up petty crime. Unfortunately, **Luke** and **Danny** have opted to crack down on street crime, just to take a break from world-conquering super-villains!

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MOON KNIGHT #29—Written by DOUG MOENCH. Pencils by BILL SIENKIEWICZ. First of a two-part story that heralds the return of the tortured **Werewolf by Night,** who journeys from the West Coast, for **Moon Knight's** aid in a mysterious quest.

KULL THE CONQUEROR #2—Written by DOUG MOENCH. Pencils and cover by JOHN BOLTON. "The Blood of Kings" is spilled when **King Kull** finds his most trusted advisers and friends are being transformed into hideous creatures of the night, leaving him nowhere to go and no one to turn to. A direct-only masterpiece in the Starlord format. Do not miss it.

DOCTOR STRANGE SPECIAL EDITION #1—Written by STEVE ENGLEHART. Pencilled by FRANK BRUNNER. Reprinting in the Starlord format, the epic encounter between the **Mystic Mage** and the deadly **Silver Dagger,** as originally depicted in **Doc's** own magazine, #1—#5.

GI JOE #9—Written by LARRY HAMA. Pencils by MIKE VOSBURG. Inks by CHIC STONE. It's suburban paranoia as **Snake Eyes, Scarlet** and **Zap** are captured by **Cobra** and brought to Springfield, U.S.A., a villainous Everytown that could be in your neighborhood. Plus the origin of **Snake Eyes!**

11/23 shipping

FANTASTIC FOUR #252—A JOHN BYRNE production. Upon arriving in the **Negative Zone,** the **FF** comes across a fantastic new world and must learn why, on this somewhat backward planet, there is a lifeless, computerized "Cityscape."

IRON MAN #168—Written by DENNY O'NEIL. Pencils by LUKE McDONNELL. Inks by STEVE MITCHELL. **Tony Stark's** downward slide continues as, in the midst of his ever-deepening gloom, he must battle **Machine Man.**

PETER PARKER #76—Written by BILL MANTLO. Pencils by AL MILGROM. Inks by JIM MOONEY. Surgeons labor desperately to put together what is left of the **Black Cat,** who remains "At Death's Door." **Doctor Octopus** returns. And in the midst of all this, **Peter** faces the most dreaded crisis of all—exams!

DEFENDERS #117—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Pencils by DON PERLIN. Inks by HILARY BARTA. The **Overmind** says "Good-bye, Hello" to his own "roots" as he explores the various beings who make up his persona.

STAR WARS #69—Written by DAVID MICHELINIE. Pencils by GENE DAY. Inks by TOM PALMER. The good news is that **Lela** has found a man who may have information that will enable her to rescue **Han Solo.** The bad news is that **Lela** needs rescuing herself since the man has taken her prisoner!

MASTER OF KUNG FU #122—Written by STEVEN GRANT. A secret code book has been stolen — and **Shang Chi** must get it back. But can he outwit the mysterious master spy called **Vienna?**

THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #3—Pencils by, among others, WALT SIMONSON, PAUL SMITH, and FRANK MILLER as we cover letters **D(aredevil)** through **E(lektra)** (MILLER fans please note.)

WARLOCK #4—Reprinting JIM STARLIN's **Warlock** material from #12, #13 and #14 which wraps up the **Magus** saga, features a bizarre interlude with **Warlock's** sidekick, **Pip** the Troll, and introduces the dreaded **Star Thief.**

DREADSTAR #2—Issue 2 of JIM STARLIN's opus brings us "Willow's Story," explaining how **Willow** went from being an ordinary mine worker *(see Epic #15)* to being a blind telepath.

MARVEL TEAM-UP #127—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Pencils by KERRY GAMMILL. Inks by MARK ESPOSITO. "Small Wonders" is a special Christmas issue (remember the on-sale date) that features the most unexpected guest star of all—**The Watcher!**

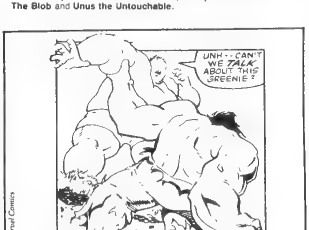
CRAZY #93 (Shipping November 9, on sale November 30, cover dated February)—Break out the Reese's Pieces as ALAN KUPPERBERG and BOB CAMP do an out-of-this-world parody of E.T. (which in *Crazy* means **Extremely Tacky**). Plus, "Doctor Doom's Game of Death," a board game that will never leave you bored, by STEVE SKEATES and PAUL KIRCHNER.

BIZARRE ADVENTURES #34 (Shipping November 16, on sale December 7, cover dated February)—In a direct-only, Starlord format package, this special Christmas issue features stories by MARK GRUENWALD, STEVEN GRANT & PAUL SMITH, DENNY O'NEIL & BILL SIENKIEWICZ, plus the brain-blasting return of LARRY HAMA's **Doctor Death** in his own X-Mas story (with Kip and Muffy) penciled by BOB CAMP. Ho-ho-ho.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #85 (Shipping November 9, on sale November 30, cover dated February)—Part One of an opus by MICHAEL FLEISHER (writer), GIL KANE (penciller) and DANNY BULANADI (inker), as an imprisoned **Conan** is set free to rescue the "Daughter of the God King" from an evil sorcerer

MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL #24: DARK CRYSTAL (Shipping November 2, on sale November 23)—written by DAVID KRAFT, penciled by BRET BLEVINS, a beautifully put-together adaptation that more than does justice to the film that spawned it—an innovative mix of fantasy and puppetry from **Jim Henson Associates** which will be releasing right around Christmas

MARVEL FANFARE #7 (Shipping November 16, on sale December 7, cover dated March) —**The Hulk** is featured in a story written by STEVEN GRANT, penciled by JOE BARNEY and inked by GEORGE FREEMAN in which **Greenskin** discovers that "With Friends Like These ... " you don't need enemies, especially when the friends are **The Blob** and **Unus the Untouchable.**



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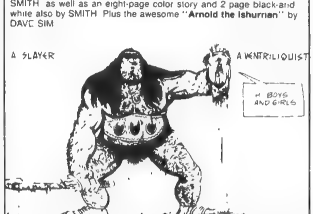
STAR SLAMMERS (Marvel Graphic Novel #5) (Shipping 11/8)—They're here. The Intergalactic Mercenaries known as the **Star Slammers**, written and drawn by WALT **(X-Men/Teen Titans)** SIMONSON. Learn who they are and why they must fight a war for their own survival and evolution

THE NEW MUTANTS #1 (Now shipping November 2, on sale November 23)—Time to get in additional orders so that no one will have to miss the **New Mutants** in their first encounter with the Danger Room, or miss meeting the mysterious someone who is out to kill **Psyche.** Mutant madness in the Mighty Marvel tradition

EPIC #16 (Shipping November 17, on sale December 8, cover dated February)—Featuring a lovely color cover by BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH as well as an eight-page color story and 2 page black-and white also by SMITH. Plus the awesome "**Arnold the Ishurnan**" by DAVE SIM



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DC — 11/16 shipping

BLACKHAWK #258 - Second of two parts. Blackhawk has fallen victim to Nazi subterfuge and secret weaponry, leaving Stanislaus to lead the group as best he is able. Story by Mark Evanier, art by able Dan Spiegle.

WONDER WOMAN #301 - The writer's reins are handed over to Dan Mishkin, who, along with editor Merv Wolfman, plans to delve deeply into the rich lore of the Princess of Paradise Island. Here, the Amazing Amazon is reacquainted with an ancestor.

ARAK, SON OF THUNDER #19 - As Arak and crew continue their quest to find White Cathey, Valda is blinded—and Arak and Satyricus must obtain "The Stone of Sight" to restore her vision. Story by Roy Thomas, art by Adrian Gonzales and Alfredo Alcala. In the Valda second feature, the Iron Maiden uncovers a plot to assassinate Carolus Magnus. Story by Roy and Danette Thomas, art by Gonzales and Alcala. Cover by Gonzales and Alcala.

© 1982 DC Comics

SUPERMAN SPECIAL #1 - "Behold! The Ultimate Man!" is written, pencilled and inked by Gil Kane in this debut issue. The Man of Steel faces the end-result of a noble experiment gone awry—an attempt to create beings as advanced as Superman. Kane also did the cover.

ADVENTURE COMICS DIGEST #497 - Leading off is the concluding installment of the five-part origin of the Challengers of the Unknown by Bob Rozakis, Alex Toth and Frank Giacoia. The two classic reprints this month are more from the early days of The Legion of Super-Heroes. From **Superboy #96** comes Ultra Boy's origin in "The Boy With Ultra Powers," and, from **Adventure Comics #300**, "The Face Behind the Lead Mask," which marked the beginning of the first regular run of LSH stories. Also: Aquaman in "The Explanation"; the Spectre in "Stop That Kid"; and the Shazam story, "The Mighty Marvels Join Forces." The front cover is by Gil Kane, and the back cover is by Pars Cullins and Frank Giacoia.

THE FURY OF FIRESTORM #10 - Pat Broderick returns after a brief time off, and a 3-part story featuring the attack of Hyena begins. Martin Stein's ex-wife also enters the picture, in what promises to have startling developments over the next several issues—especially since it looks as if Stein's job is in jeopardy. Story by Gerry Conway, inks by Rodin Rodriguez, cover by Broderick.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #212 - One little man is the key to the salvation of the entire universe—and it's up to the JLA to see to it that he survives! It's the final installment to this three-parter from the JLA casebook, written by Gerry Conway, drawn by Rich Buckler, inked by Romeo Tanghel and sporting a cover by George Perez.

THE BEST OF DC DIGEST #34 - Featuring two classic stories of Doc Magnus and his robotic band—The Metal Men. Featured are "The Flaming Doom" from **Showcase #39-40**. The cover is by Ed Hannigan.

DC COMICS PRESENTS #55 - Teaming Superman and Air Wave; also guest-starring Superboy and the original Air Wave. Story by Bob Rozakis, pencils by Alex Saviuk, who is also the cover penciller.

11/23 shipping

BATMAN #357 - The return of the slithery Squid! Gerry Conway, writer; Don Newton, penciller; Alfredo Alcala, inker. Cover is by Ed Hannigan and Dick Giordano.

G.I. COMBAT #251 - Featuring The Haunted Tank. In "No Son For A Sergeant," the crew's oldest member, Sgt. Craig, is reunited with his tankman son, Eddie. The second Haunted Tank tale is "The Souvenir Nobody Wanted," in which a small memento provides one of the crew with an unexpected but invaluable surprise. Also, "The Killer Cannon," featuring The Mercenaries, and two other battle dramas. Cover by Kubert.

SUPERMAN #381 - "Whose Super-Life Is It, Anyway?" Superboy's mind is still in the body of his adult self ... leading to all sorts of confusion with the supporting cast—especially Lois. Story by Cary Bates, pencils by Curt Swan, inks by Dave Hunt.

THE NEW TEEN TITANS #29 - The return of the insidious and very deadly Brotherhood of Evil! Story by Marv Wolfman, pencils by George Perez and inks by Romeo Tanghal. Cover by Perez.

THE SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING #11 - "Heart of Stone, Feet of Clay" continues this four-parter. In this, the second chapter of the story which turns the Shambling Muckmonster's world on end, Dr. Kripptmann and his "secret operatives" create a golem to use against Karen Clancy. Story by Marty Pasko, and art by Tom Yeates, who also crafts the cover.

THE FLASH #319 - Creed Phillips must choose between his

own love for Fiona and his career as the Eradicator, while Flash and Capt. Invincible continue to stalk him. It's all in this story by Cary Bates, Carmine Infantino and Dennis Jensen. Also: The second Creeper story by Carl Gafford and Dave Gibbons.

11/30 shipping

CAMELOT 3000 #4 - This year's most asked about series. An invader is attacking the battlements of New Camelot—Sir Tristam's fiancee. It's all part of this epic of sword and saucery set in A.D. 3000. Written by Mike W. Barr, pencilled by Brian Bolland, and inked by Bruce Patterson. Cover by Bolland.

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #196 - Ragman returns in this story crafted by Robert Kanigher, the creator of this, one of his most original comics creations. Jim Aparo is the artist both interior and exterior.

SGT. ROCK #374 - "Trust Me" begins this issue, another Rock story by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. Also: "Taxi Tanker," by Jack C. Harris and Rex Lindsey, and "Lucky 7" by Kanigher. Cover by Joe Kubert.

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #287 - Cosmic Boy was the first Legion leader. He has always been a model of devotion to law and duty, always cool, always able to handle any situation with diplomacy and aplomb—that is, up until now. In this issue, the normally even-tempered Cos goes berserk when his parents and brother are among the victims of a particularly gruesome crime. And, when Cosmic Boy seeks redress, not even the Legionnaires are certain that he won't violate the Legion's most sacred pledge—never to take a human life. "Mettle" is the title of a human drama, by Paul Levitz, writer, Keith Giffen, penciller, and Larry Mahlstedt, inker. The cover is by Giffen and Mahlstedt.

THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY #314 - Another vampire stalks Bennett. He seeks revenge, believing Bennett to be the man responsible for his vampirism—only Bennett **isn't.** Story by Dan Mishkin & Gary Cohn, art by Tom Sutton. Also featured: Steve Skeates tale entitled "Food For Thought," drawn by Rodin Rodriguez; and "Game of Survival" by Mishkin & Cohn, Mark Texiera and Tony De Zuniga. Cover by Mike Kaluta.

THE NIGHT FORCE #8 - Beginning a totally new tale of the Baron's occult troubleshooters. It's set in the city, where a

mysterious evil presence is occupying a house where all may enter—and none may leave. Also: the epilogue to the first adventure. Both are by Marv Wolfman, Gene Colan and Bob Smith. Cover by Gene Colan.

WARLORD #87 - Travis Morgan's adventures in the eternal daylight of Skartaris continue in this book with cover and story by Mike Grell and pencils by Dan Jurgens. Also: The Barren Earth continues with "The City In The Sand." The Earth expedition's lone survivor finds the Earth garrison left behind after all those years—just as it's attacked by the Harshashan. Story by Gery Cohn, art by Ron Randall.

THE DARING NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERGIRL #5 - The Maid of Might versus: The Gang! It's a team of new villains with enough mind and muscle to create disaster in the Second City—and it's up to Supergirl to stop them. Chronicled by Paul Kupperberg, pencilled by Carmine Infantino and inked by Bob Oksner. The LOIS LANE story resoves the mystery of the prophetic newspaper stories that have been popping up on the desks of DAILY PLANET staffers. It's called "Brain Drain" and it's writtten by Tamsyn O'Flynn and drawn by Bob Oksner.

GREEN LANTERN #162 - The Green Gladiator's space exile continues. It's not easy being alone in space—especially when your ship is being swiped. Story by **Camelot 3000**'s Mike W. Barr, whose work is beginning to build quite a following, and art by Keith Pollard. Tales of the Green Lantern Corps is a story written by Kurt Busiek and pencilled by Richard Howell. It's called "The Price You Pay," and details the inner conflict of Liana, Green Lantern on M'elu, who can either save a planet's inhabitants by altering its environment, or let them die. Sal Trapani inks. Keith Pollard is the cover artist.

12/07 shipping

ALL-STAR SQUADRON #19 - Jerry Ordway takes over pencilling and inker chores full-time on this issue, which also marks the return of the Justice Society of America. The JSA isn't around for long, however, because Brain Wave also makes an appearance within these pages—and evidently does away with them in a sequence based upon an earlier JSA yarn. Roy Thomas writes this book-lengther. Cover by Ordway.

ACTION COMICS #541 - The conclusion of the saga of the slit Superman, in a full-length story by Marv Wolfman and Gil Kane.

WEIRD WAR TALES #121 - "Death Smiles Thrice" as the Nazis use the same weapon on The Creature Commandos that took out the G.I. Robot. Also: "Gremlins in the Works," by S.C. Ringgenberg, Pans Cullins and Joe Giella.

ARION, LORD OF ATLANTIS #5 - The quest for the powerful Zodiac crystals continues, this time in Wyynde's village. Story by Paul Kupperberg, art by Jan Duursema.

JONAH HEX #70 - Story by Michael Reisher, Dick Ayers and Tony De Zuniga.

DETECTIVE COMICS #524 - Concluding the Squid two-parter. Also: Robin meets with a young boy whose parents die in much the same fasion as did his own. He, in the coming months, will unge The Batman to take the boy under his wing, much in the way The Batman once took Robin under his tutelage. Story is by Gerry Conway, art is by Gene Colan. The second story is Joey Cavalieri and Irv Novick's Green Arrow. Ed Hannigan pencilled the cover.

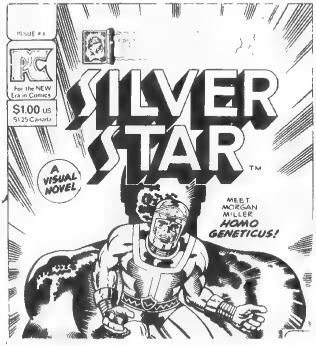
WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #289 - The World's Finest Duo have to turn the tables on the Zodiac menace, or else it's curtains for them! Story by Cary Burkett.

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY #38 - In time for Christmas, a Christmas story. It's by Paul Kupperberg and Kurt Schaffenberger, and is set on an latemate Earth. Also in this issue: Clel H for Hero, in a story entitled "Beyond A Shadow of a Doubt." Written by Bob Rozakis and E. Nelson Bridwell and drawn by Howard Bender.

CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW! #13 - Roy Thomas and E. Nelson Bridwell bring the Zoo Crew face to face with its coolest foe yet. It's that glacial gobbler—that frigid fowl—Cold Turkey!

PACIFIC

SILVER STAR #1 (Shipping 11/9) Written and pencilled by Jack Kirby. Inks by Mike Royer. Silver Star gathers a superhero team to oppose fire-eating, satanic evangelist Darius Drum.



TWISTED TALES #1 (Shipping late November) Written and edited by Bruce Jones. Cover and lead story by Richard Corben. Other stories by Brett Blevins, Tim Conrad, and Alfredo Alcala.

FIRST

WARP #1 (Shipping 11/9) Cover by Frank Brunner. Pencils by Brunner, dialogue by Peter Gillis, inks by Bob Smith. Second story by Jack Harris and Steve Ditko.

ECLIPSE

DESTROYER DUCK #2 (Shipping 11/9) Steve Gerber, Jack Kirby, and Alfredo Alcala. Plus the Starling by Jerry Siegel and Val Mayerik.

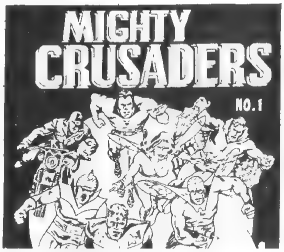
THRILLING DETECTIVE ADVENTURES #1 (Shipping 11/29) Ms. Tree stars in a story by Max Allen Collins and Terry Beatty. Dean Mullaney and Dan Adkins present the first adventure of the Scythe. Plus a pinup by Frank Miller. Cover by Beatty.

ARCHIE -

WORLD OF ARCHIE #128
WORLD OF JUGHEAD #128
BETTY AND VERONICA #322
PEP #388
EVERYTHING ARCHIE #105
ARCHIE AT RIVERDALE #90
ARCHIE AND ME #138
LITTLE ARCHIE #138
ARCHIE DIGEST #58
ARCHIE WHERE ARE YOU DIGEST #25

RED CIRCLE

MIGHTY CRUSADERS #1 The Fly, Shield, Web, Black Hood, Comet, Fly Girl, and Jaguar star in a book written and drawn by Rich Buckler.



AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

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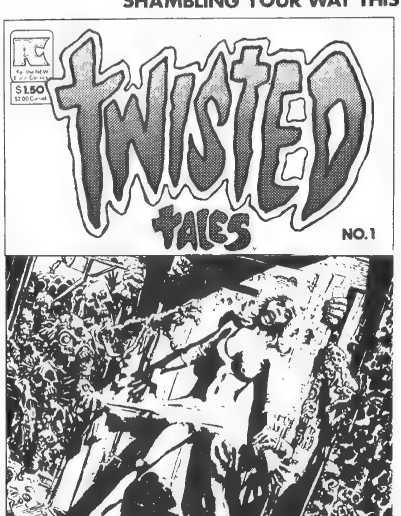

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—FOREWARD—

One day, several years ago, Marvel called and asked if I'd like to write a new strip they were planning in the Kung Fu genre. I, of course, said no. My interest in Kung Fu is surpassed only by my interest in Bolivian-made drill press armatures. "But the strip is going to be drawn by Don Heck," they said. There was a long pause on my end of the wire, then a deep exhale. "What does that mean?" the Marvel editor asked. "It means," I explained, "that I've got to go learn all about Kung Fu." That's how much I like Don Heck's artwork.

The project, alas, never made it past the discussion stage. A sudden plummet in sales of Marvel's other Kung Fu titles caused the new one to be aborted and I missed out on my chance to work with one of my favorite artists. But I have an even better anecdote than that. One day, back when I was editing funnybooks for Hanna-Barbera, an artist named Art Capello came to me, asking for work. If the name's not familiar to you, Art was the lead artist for years for Charlton's romance comics. And I know Art won't mind me saying this: For fifteen years, he made a decent living, swiping Don Heck art.

A few days before, I'd made a trade deal for the originals to one of Heck's love comics for Marvel. Real nice pages, inked by Frank Giacoia. So when Art came to my home and showed me his samples, the first job he displayed was a Charlton romance story, completely comprised of swipes from the very story I'd just acquired. I casually reached over about five feet to the table, hoisted the Heck pages, and displayed them to Cappello. He was thrilled. He grabbed them and began eagerly studying. "Fifteen years, I've been swiping this guy's stuff," said Art. "Never got a chance to see any of his originals. Wait-I take that back. I inked backgrounds one time for Colletta on a Heck job. Jeez, those pencils were terrific."

Art's not alone in his opinion. Jack Kirby has gone on record as calling Heck the best "girl" artist ever in comics. Steve Gerber, who wrote many of Heck's later super-hero jobs for Marvel, was equally impressed, as was Dick Giordano who has frequently inked Don Heck pencils. There are dozens of others.

MR. ALCHEMY BE FIGHTING DR. ALCHEMY...
...WHEN THEY'RE BOTH ALTER-EGOS OF AL DESMOND?
THE AVENGERS #109 BACK IN ACTION!
© 1982 DC Comics

Most of us first noticed Heck on **The Avengers** and **Iron Man** back in Marvel's earlier days. Having excelled in war, western, ghost, and love comics for years, Heck suddenly found himself stuck on "action" strips. His position was not an enviable one, since, at the time, he was competing with Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, both of whom were more suited to the form. But Heck tried and managed to finish at least a close third to them.

Now when one looks back at those **Avengers** issues - particularly those inked by Wood, Giacoia, and best of all, Heck himself--they look surprisingly good. Excellent, in fact. I think that, just as an illustrator, he draws better than just about anyone in comics. If, over the years, he hasn't always demonstrated this, it's because he has an unenviable record of being put on the wrong strips with the wrong inkers. Despite this, his talents usually show through. His issues of **KA-ZAR** sold better than those drawn by John Buscema; his issues of **X-MEN** outsold those by Neal Adams. And, when **DC** assigned him to **The Flash**, I winced. Wrong strip for the man. Still, Heck worked hard on it, and soon I was hearing folks throughout fandom praising his work. Lately, owing to his recent **DC** work--and to a few Heck-critics whose blind-spot criticisms have brought Heck fans fans out of the woodwork by the popularity. Fans are finding his work has an integrity that is sadly lacking in comics today. He doesn't use gimmicks, and he doesn't "cheat" drawing. He has learned certain things from folks like Kirby, Adams, and John Buscema without sacrificing his own, individual style. A lot of my favorite comics of all time have been drawn by Don Heck.

I always wanted to know more about him but we've never met, and the one time we talked on the phone ten years ago, I could never get him off the subject of how great he though Jack Kirby was (a mutual feeling, by the way). Happily, in the interview that follows, Richard Howell had better luck than I did.

-Mark Evanier

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VOILÀ! NOW THERE'S MY IDEA! WHADDA YA SAY, SHALL WE GIVE IT A SHOT?
OH BARRY, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
THE EXQUISITE VISION ON THE YOUNG POLICE SCIENTIST'S ARM IS ONE FIONA WEBB --HIS NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR AND DATE FOR THE DAY...
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An interview with DON HECK

© 1982 Marvel Comics

By Richard Howell

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HOWELL: We'll start with a real easy one. How did you get into comics?

HECK: I started work at Harvey Publications-inside, doing paste-up, and white-out, and finishing off reprint work and stuff.

HOWELL: That was in the early 1950s?

HECK: That was 1949. About December 1949, I think is when I first started. I always wanted to be a cartoonist, only because one of my favorites was Milt Caniff. Obviously. (Laughter)

HOWELL: Yeah, I picked that up.

HECK: Anybody could tell.

HOWELL: What was Harvey publishing at the time? What sort of comics?

HECK: Well, they used to put out TERRY AND THE PIRATES-they used to put out a lot of reprints. DICK TRACY, TERRY AND THE PIRATES, that one that Alfred Andriola did, KERRY DRAKE...

HOWELL: Right.

HECK: They were also the ones that put out BOY'S RANCH by Jack Kirby (and Joe Simon).

HOWELL: I know it well.

HECK: Yeah, that was a beaut. I wish I would'a grabbed a bunch. I was right there in the office (laughter).

HOWELL: Oh, boy.

HECK: But that's life, y'know. If you could only go back...

HOWELL: I guess. So they were involved in quite a lot of different types of comics?

HECK: Yeah, quite a bit. They had romance, they had BLACK CAT, done by Lee Elias. They also had, oh, JOE PALOOKA, LITTLE MAX...Now you're really joggin' em.

HOWELL: Did you start drawing for Harvey, too?

HECK: No, I didn't. In fact, one of the guys who was there was in circulation or something like that, and he was leaving. About that time another friend of mine was leaving, too, and I thought well, I was going to get all the garbage stuff to do, so I decided I'd better go out and try to free-lance. I made some samples up, but they (Harvey) weren't interested in my work–which was normal, I was only a beginner. Then I decided I'd call up three different outfits in one day. I decided to go out and try to see if I could sell anything.

HOWELL: There were more publishers in those days, I take it?

HECK: There were about 20-25 in those days. I mean, you could just pick up your phone and take a shot. And so, the first day I walked out I got two jobs. I didn't even go to the third guy.

HOWELL: Why bother?

HECK: Anyway, talk about luck. One job was for Quality and the other, I think was for Hillman.

HOWELL: Do you remember what they were?

HECK: The names of the stories, or something?

HOWELL: Well, characters, or what types...

HECK: Well, no, it wasn't that. It was just, like, mystery stuff or weird stuff. No major comic or anything.

HOWELL: So you actually started drawing by doing the mystery stories?

HECK: Yeah. More or less, yeah–like the weird type stuff. Then, I guess I did a couple of those, and then this fellow I told you about who worked in circulation at Harvey called me up because he was going to start a publishing outfit. And so, I got by for the first two years free-lancing. I had somebody who wanted me to start working for him. I got very lucky. Then what did I do? I have an old book here, so I can look up what the hell I did (laughter). I did work for WAR FURY and WEIRD TERROR, and what else? HORRIFIC and stuff like that. DANGER COMICS. It was about these different men who did all sort of things, like working in steel mills and all sorts of things like that.

HOWELL: Oh, really?

HECK: And then we finally wound up with a main

26 HOURS LATER WE ENTERED THE SPHERE OF A REMOTE EXTERNAL GALAXY. WE SELECTED A PLANET TO LAND ON--A PLANET WE LATER NAMED "ATAVISIUS"...
THIS LOOKS LIKE AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY...

"So my friend said, 'Listen, if you want Don Heck I'll have him come up here."

character—I think his name was Johnny Danger, if I'm not mistaken, who was like a private investigator, or something like that. I did a series of those stories.

HOWELL: What publishing company was that?

HECK: It was Media Comics. It was a small outfit. It lasted about two years. In fact, I met Ross Andru there, when Ross was tied up with Mike Esposito, and their combination publishing name was Mike/Ross.

HOWELL: And they were dealing with Media Comics?

HECK: Yeah. They did a couple of jobs. In fact, they did a western—some western book they had put together. It could have been DEATH VALLEY. I think Ross did the cover on DEATH VALLEY-1.

HOWELL: You said that the outfit only lasted a couple of years...

HECK: Well, everything took a nosedive back in about 1954. 1952 is when I started free-lancing—I think it was about March—and it lasted until about 1954, which is when a lot of companies went downhill, took the slide.

HOWELL: Is that because of the investigations which eventually resulted in the Comics Code?

HECK: Yes, I guess it was. I think it was the Kefauver Committee, and they were jumping all over EC, and everything else like that, and a lot of companies went under—because they weren't selling. They just happened to jump on them at the perfect time, when they were going downhill anyway.

HOWELL: It must have been a very unsettled time for somebody working in the industry...

HECK: Yes, ever so slightly, yeah (laughter). That was about June 1954, I think. I went to work for Toby Press for a couple of jobs. I did a "Captain Gallant," and a couple of westerns. I liked to do westerns, and weird, and war, and all the stuff like that.

HOWELL: You seem to have hung on during the attrition.

HECK: Yeah, well I did, surprisingly enough. I got a couple of jobs from Toby, and then my friend from Harvey, Pete Morisi—hey! That's his name! We were pretty good friends at the time, but you're talking something like 28 years ago. Anyway, he had gone up to Stan Lee, and was looking for some work, and Stan Lee was always pointing to other peoples' work as examples. The particular book that he gave my friend had some of my stuff in the front, and he was pointing to that all the time and saying, "This is what you should be doing." So my friend said, "Listen, if you want Don Heck, I'll have him come up here." (Laughter) He called me up, and I took a run up there to see if I could get some work, and that's when I started to work for Marvel, which at the time was Magazine Management. It was September 1, 1954.

HOWELL: You've got a good memory for these dates.

HECK: Only because I got the book in front of me. I would have known it was September 1954, but I wouldn't have known it was September first.

HOWELL: And what were you working on for Marvel at that point?

HECK: "WEREWOLF BEWARE" (laughter).

HOWELL: Oh, boy!

HECK: Yeah. "THE RED PIRATE." I remember that one, that was one of those .... (laughter), you know had the whale crushing into one of those whaling boats (laughter), you know, the ones they throw the harpoons from? Not the big ship, but the small jobs. And there were westerns, and then it says here that December was the first time I did a NAVY COMBAT. That's when I got involved with...

HOWELL: War comics?

HECK: Yeah. Well, I did a character in there called Torpedo Taylor, who was—obviously—a submarine type.

HOWELL: We must be into the middle 1950s by this time.

HECK: Yeah, about 1955.

HOWELL: And there was something going on at Marvel

"And at the time, I thought, 'Oh, my God! This'll never work!"

THERE IS SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT ABOUT YOU! I SENSE THAT YOU ARE--NOT A GOD WHO PROTECTS EGYPT, BUT...WHO ARE YOU?
SORRY, CLEOPATRA! I COULD NOT EVEN BEGIN TO EXPLAIN IT!
IF HE'S DESTROYED OR HIDDEN IT, I MAY BE STUCK IN THE PAST FOREVER!! CLEOPATRA'S BEAUTY IS ALMOST WORTH IT, BUT MY WORK IS IN THE 20TH CENTURY!
PRESENTLY, NEAR AN OASIS...
IT IS NIMI, THE CREATURE WHO DESTROYED STARK!
NOBLE MATAP! A SMALL FORCE OF CLEOPATRA'S SOLDIERS APPROACHES LED BY A GOLDEN-ARMORED FIGURE!
QUICKLY TO THE CHARIOTS!

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about 1956 or 1957, wasn't there—in which a lot of their books got cancelled?

HECK: Oh yeah. That was about April 1957. For a long time, like I say, I did westerns, and Navy stuff. I also did some jungle stuff, about a character named Cliff Mason...

HOWELL: At that point were you getting enough work from Marvel so that...

HECK: I was working exclusively for Marvel. Well, I worked for Marvel for some twenty-odd years—straight, almost. Yeah, it was straight through until May 1957. I remember going into the city, and I sent my wife up to the office at the time and said, "Just pick up another job," and she came down and said, "There is none." (Laughter) Which is a surprise. So I got lucky again. I'm halfway out on the Island (Long Island, NY), and this fellow 'round the corner—I used to do somelittle sketches for him occasionally, nothing spectacular—used to say he could use my work. I went over there and said, "You're always asking me if I have some time," I said. "Now I got all the time in the world." So I did model airplane drafting for about a year over at his house—two years, almost. In 1958, I was doing a combination of both types of work. That's when Stan Lee decided to get back into the comics, and I think that one fellow had died—I can't think of his name...

HOWELL: In the late 1950s?

HECK: Yeah, about 1958. He used to do quite a bit. He did a lot of their covers—nice guy.

HOWELL: Joe Maneely?

HECK: Maneely, Joe Maneely—right! I'm not sure if that had anything to do with it, but...

HOWELL: It seemed that for the greater part of the 1950s that Maneely and Bill Everett and Russ Heath were holding down the fort at Marvel.

HECK: Yeah. So when Maneely died, Stan Lee called in a few people, and one of those he called was me. The first thing I did for him was a five-page space story. I don't know what the name of it is. All it says in the book here is "five page space story." That was July 1958.

HOWELL: That sounds like just about the time that TALES TO ASTONISH and TALES OF SUSPENSE debuted. Could that be it?

HECK: It says here that I did the first TALES OF SUSPENSE cover, No. 1, in July—the 25th—and four pages in JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY in August. I was doing a couple of jobs a month, or something like that, because I was still working at the other job at the same time. And after I had been off the comics (even though I was still drawing) for a whole year and then getting back... whoo!! (Laughter) That first story—it was a rough one.

HOWELL: Had Jack Kirby rejoined Marvel by the time you began working there again?

HECK: I don't know. I didn't go in there much at the time. It's possible.

HOWELL: It seems very strange for somebody like me to hear about how infrequently the artists actually met.

HECK: Oh, you mean the "Bullpen" stuff. That was a lot of stuff that Stan Lee put into magazines, but the artists were all over the Island. Even today, I could go into the office two times this week, and somebody else could go in two other times...you just don't cross paths. Or I might come in late in the afternoon, and that somebody else will have been there early in the morning.

HOWELL: So you might never meet your inker, or your writer.

HECK: That's true. For a long time it would happen that way. The only reason I met Jack is that a couple of times I went over to his house. It was about 1963. There was some paper he was using that I happened to like, and there was a place right close near to him that was selling it. So I went in there.

HOWELL: And was that the first time you met Kirby?

DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO MY KISSER, DOLL! BENEATH THIS ROUGH EXTERIOR BEATS A HEART FULL'A LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT! Y'KNOW, YOU'RE MY TYPE!
INSULTS? WILL GET YOU NOWHERE, MISTER HOGAN!
ARE YA BRUSHIN' ME OFF, ME, HAPPY HOGAN, WHO HAS FINALLY FOUND THE DAME OF HIS DREAMS?
MY DEAR HO HOGAN, YOUR DREAM WOULD ONLY BE MY NIGHTMARE! IN SHORT, YOU WOULDN'T BY MY TYPE EVEN IF YOU WERE MY TYPE!
MMM. I GET THE PICTURE. IT'S HIM STARK... WHO MAKES YER TICKER GO THUMP, THUMP, RIGHT?
RIGHT! ONLY HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M ALIVE. BUT SOME-DAY HE WILL... AND THEN HE'LL GIVE UP ALL HIS ACTRESSES AND DEBUTANTES AND I'LL BECOME MRS. ANTHONY STARK!

"They were *characters*, y'know, in a certain sense of the word."

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HECK: No, I met him once or twice up at the office, but not that often. Very infrequently. I met him first, originally, at Harvey, when he was doing BOY'S RANCH--I think--No. 1. I was working in there and as I was leaving, Jack and Joe Simon came in. They had come in just as the regular office was closing, and they were going to work and finish something there, so...

HOWELL: They worked in the Harvey offices?

HECK: They did that time, and one of them was going to use my desk. That's the first time I met Jack Kirby. Although, I had seen his work, obviously.

HOWELL: You mentioned before that Milton Caniff was one of your main influences...

HECK: Oh yeah, no question about it.

HOWELL: Who were the others?

HECK: Oh, let's see...well, I was like the one who would look at everybody. There was, of course, Hal Foster...

HOWELL: And Alex Raymond?

HECK: Alex Raymond, yes.

Yeah, just about. Well, you know, they were the top. I also liked Raeburn Van Buren of ABBIE AND SLATS--he was great for girls and stuff. And when I started to free-lance more, I spotted that guy Al Toth, who was (chuckle) fantastic for layout and design. He influenced me too.

HOWELL: I guess I have picked that out.

HECK: Yeah. Well, you could see it. You're going to be influenced by looking at things, and I mean you can't make something out of nothing. You can't just stick somebody in a closet and expect them to suddenly develop, regardless of what anybody thinks.

HOWELL: Yeah. There's a whole generation of artists--yours, I guess, who all show a strong Milton Caniff influence.

HECK: Yeah. Of course, it would be normal, y'know, because at the time all of a sudden you'd see his stuff and you'd think, "Wow! Where the heck did he come from?!" Bad enough when I started free-lancing. I'd just looked at the Harvey stuff: They had Lee Elias, and a few other good ones up there. But then I go out and I see all of these Jack Davis jobs and all of that other EC stuff, and I said, "My God! These are the guys I gotta go up against?" It gets a little scary. Then I figured, well, there's gotta be room at the bottom somewhere. (Chuckle)

HOWELL: When the Marvel super-hero explosion, such as it was, got going, did you work in the same manner with Stan Lee as did Kirby and Ditko--contributing all the story's pacing?

HECK: You mean when they suddenly threw a synopsis at you?

HOWELL: Yes.

HECK: Boy, that was a surprise (laughter). I'd been so used to working from scripts, and then Stan said, "I'm going to give you a synopsis." Well, Jack Kirby was used to something like that because he was also a writer--I mean some people might not have liked the stuff he did later, but he did some terrific stuff with all of his different characters, like back when he was doing FIGHTING AMERICAN and all the rest of his early stuff--so it was easy for him. For me it was suddenly that someone says, "You're going to do it!" I said, "I'll try it, but, I mean, it's your gamble, not mine. I'm going to get paid for this." Then we started to work out the system, and then after a while Stan Lee used to, like, give you the first three pages, tell you who the character was you were fighting, and give you the last couple of pages so you'd know how it ended. And in between you'd put about fifteen page of stuff.

HOWELL: Sounds pretty loose.

HECK: It was. It was. And at the time, I thought, "Oh, my God! This'll never work!" But then I'd sit down and start to figure different things that these types of characters could do. Then when I went back to working from a script, years and

"[The groups] get too many of them in there, and then they decide to fight 65 other guys..."

FOR THREE ISSUES OF THE REGULAR SIZE AVENGERS BOOK, WE'VE BEEN LEAPING BETWEEN THE VISION AND THE EMBRYONIC MANTIS...SO IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP NOW!
MANTIS IS THIS ONE MISTAKEN,
YES, VERDAD? ONE THERE AS ANOTHER AVENGER.
...OR IS THERE NOT ANOTHER AVENGER EXPECTED HERE AT THE TEMPLE OF THE KREE?
YOU--ASK THIS ONE A QUESTION? YOU--APPARENTLY OMNISCIENT!

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years later, sometimes I felt like I was a little closed in. I got used to the synopsis.

HOWELL: Do you feel that working from a synopsis opened up the possibilities of what you could do?

HECK: Oh yeah, absolutely. I'll tell you why: because you're not hindered by the amount of copy that's there, your're not suddenly stuck with a six-panel or seven-panel page. You can suddenly throw a big panel in there, or a couple of small ones across the bottom, and then catch up with the story later on, or expand it out. You don't feel, "I must put six panels on here and I've got to have so many balloons." It's a freer way of working.

HOWELL: You prefer doing that, then?

HECK: More or less, yeah. But, y'know, I'm at DC now and they work differently. I mean, somebody like (Marv) Wolfman or somebody like that would probably rather work with the synopsis, and I think I did a couple of stories with Gerry...

HOWELL: Conway? Would that be the STEEL series?

HECK: The STEEL one, yeah. He sent synopsis in and I worked from them. You can see the difference. There is an openness about some of those pages that wouldn't be in something I drew from a script. You can have big panels, and since the copy gets put down later, it's no big problem.

HOWELL: Do you think it's an advantage for the writer, too?

HECK: I think so sometimes. It can go either way. It depends on whether he's used to doing it that way, but it allows him to have something in front of him when he's suddenly starting to put balloons in. Sometimes it probably is a hindrance, when he looks at the page and says, "My God! What am I going to do with this? But when we draw it, we're also writing on the side of the page what's actually happening, so it's not as though the writer suddenly looks at four wordless panels and wonders what the hell's going on. I mean, it shouldn't be that way, anyway. As long as he remembers what he wrote.

HOWELL: When did Stan start the synopsis system for you?

HECK: I believe about 1962. It could have been 1963. I don't think he started it with me as early as with some of the others up there. I'm sure Jack was doing stuff from synopsis a lot earlier than that.

HOWELL: Yeah, and maybe Ditko.

HECK: Yeah, probably, because they were used to that. In fact, I think Joe—Joe Sinnott used to pencil and ink at that time, and I don't think he liked the idea of the synopsis. Well, I wasn't exactly thrilled, myself.

HOWELL: Initially.

HECK: No. Somebody says, "Guess what you're doing tomorrow?" and if you've never done it, it can scare the hell out of you.

HOWELL: I bet. Did you have any favorite assignments in the Marvel line?

HECK: I used to like, well, "Iron Man" in the beginning, because of the characterization I could get into. Like when I had Happy Hogan, and that girl...

HOWELL: Pepper?

HECK: Pepper. Pepper Potts, I guess her name was. Well, when I was doing Pepper, I was thinking of Schultzie, who was the secretary on that TV show...*

HOWELL: Before my time, I'm afraid.

HECK: Well, in other words, she was the girl who never quite got the date with the boss; he's always watching all those good-looking girls.

But they were characters, y'know, in a certain sense of the word. Happy Hogan was an ex-fighter. I think they were fun to do. They had personalities you couldn't miss.

HOWELL: Were you in on the creation of those characters?

* Heck here refers to Ann B. Davis, the actress who played the character Schultzie (or Schulzie) on THE BOB CUMMINGS SHOW. Thanks to transcriber Kurt Busiek for this bit of helpful knowledge.

"Pretty soon I got to be drawing pretty girls all the time."

HECK: Oh, yeah. I did the first (Iron Man) story, remember—although the costume on Iron Man was Jack Kirby's.

HOWELL: All of them, or just the first one?

HECK: The first one was his (Kirby's). The second one, with the yellow and red, was Ditko's. I think it was IRON MAN—no, not IRON MAN, but TALES OF SUSPENSE No. 48, I believe.

HOWELL: Was it the one Ditko pencilled and you inked?

HECK: Could be, could be. I'm not sure, but I did one with Ditko, and I'm almost positive it was issue No. 48 that Ditko created the costume. I didn't go into the office much at the time, and they were better at it, anyway, better at designing things like that. I did the character bits, the scenes with Pepper Potts and Happy Hogan, and Tony Stark, and all the other things like that. I did all that kind of stuff, and I did the origin story. But what happens with something like that is that the cover is due, like a month before, so Jack makes up a cover for Iron Man, and the character's design is right there on it. Then Stan calls me up and says, "You're doing a character called Iron Man."

HOWELL: Yeah, "...and we need a story."

HECK: Yeah. That's about it. Well, Jack Kirby is the one who created most of those characters.

HOWELL: I've heard that from many sources.

HECK: Oh, absolutely, no question. He's the one who was always in there, and he's the one who was developing all those characters. Y'know, Stan and he would get together, and they'd start discussing it together.

HOWELL: Well, that's an interesting story to hear from you.

HECK: Why?

HOWELL: Because, as the saying goes, "You Were There..."

HECK: Yeah. Well, that's the way it used to happen. You may hear all different types of stories, though. Is that what you mean?

HOWELL: Pretty much.

HECK: Well, (laughter) I try not to brush the truth into the corner. It's what it is, y'know.

HOWELL: During your years at Marvel, were there any other assignments you particularly enjoyed?

HECK: Yeah. The Avengers were all right. They were pretty good. The only problem is that when you have too many characters running around, you can only really devote one or two pages to each of them. It wasn't so bad in the beginning, because there were only a few characters and they'd work as a team. As the time went by, they suddenly started putting all these other characters in there, and—I don't know. They're all too big as far as I'm concerned.

HOWELL: The groups?

HECK: Yeah. They get too many of them in there, and then they decide to fight 65 other guys (laughter). How much can you put in?

HOWELL: You seem to have been drawing the book during one of the group's smallest memberships.

HECK: Yeah, there were about four of them, I think. Something like that.

I started with No. 9. Jack Kirby (obviously) originated it. He also did the first eight issues, I believe. I got a call again (laughter), "Hello, Don, you're going to be doing AVENGERS." Didn't know anything about it.

HOWELL: At least you'd drawn some of the characters before.

HECK: Yeah. Well, I had done Thor, and I had done almost every kind of character—in fact, even today, I do get to thinking they figure, "Well, Don can always do this guy or that guy or the other one," regardless of who it is.

HOWELL: But you think that the group got out of hand later?

HECK: I don't say "out of hand," but sometimes they get to be a little too much. It's sort of like when I was doing "Iron Man" and Happy Hogan—when I was doing him originally, he'd look banged

From Pencils to Finished Work

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up, and he'd look like a character, then Stan wanted him to be handsomer, and he wanted Pepper to be handsomer, and--I don't know, that takes a lot out of it, as far as I think, anyway. I'd much rather have a character--a character is what he is, y'know, and if you pretty him up too much, you're taking the initial feeling out of it.

HOWELL: What made him what he was in the first place?

HECK: Yeah. I mean, if the girl was suddenly as pretty as Pepper was, she could get anybody anyway, so what becomes of her whole reason for being in the strip? But somebody who wasn't and suddenly gets a date with the boss or something--it becomes something terrific.

HOWELL: I think I see what you mean. And you think that the groups moved away from what caused them to be what they were in the first place?

HECK: Yeah. I think--yeah. Like the whole purpose of having those guys together in the first place was to see what they'd do together, and if you put too many of them in there, then you'll never even get a chance to see them do anything with each other--there isn't the room, y'know. Every character gets half a panel every issue (laughter).

I also did Ant-Man--and Giant-Man, which he became later. I had some fun with that.

HOWELL: That was a pretty limited cast--like two characters?

HECK: Yeah, well, that's easier for me. I'm not that fast, so I don't suddenly have to put in seventeen different characters. It gets to be a little hassling for time, sometimes.

HOWELL: That's strange to hear you say things like that, because I'd always associated you with group books.

HECK: I know. I still get associated with group books.

HOWELL: You just drew a JUSTICE LEAGUE a couple of months ago.

HECK: Yeah, well there was a fill-in to be done only because of the fact that Dick Dillin had passed away, and it was getting behind, so they pulled me off what I was doing and threw me on that. And y'know, I wasn't exactly thrilled.

HOWELL: I bet.

HECK: But what are you gonna do? That's what had to be done to get the book in on time.

HOWELL: Do you think that you were able to devote more storytelling attention and character attention to each character in, say, THE AVENGERS, in the issues you did when the group was smaller?

HECK: Yeah, well, you have to be able to. Otherwise there's too many characters running around; you really don't have that much time to get involved with the people. It's sort of like if you're in a crowded room, or you're talking to two or four people. In the crowded room, how much time are you going to be able to devote to each one of them? Compared against three or four people?

HOWELL: So do you think that when the group got bigger you had to spread the focus around?

HECK: Yeah, you have to, you have to.

HOWELL: No playing favorites?

HECK: Well, you can't really--it depends. You'd like to, and they tried to do issues where you might have eight or nine characters--I can't recall off-hand, it's been a long time--and they might just feature two or three. I thought that was a good concept, because that allows you to bring it down into a smaller group. And then you can concentrate on it--you get involved with what each character is doing--more than "1, 2, 3--he's out! We've got to put so-and-so in there, because it's his page."

HOWELL: Did you have any favorite characters in the group?

HECK: Out of AVENGERS? I can hardly remember who they were. (Chuckle) Well, Jack Kirby created Thor, and he was great. Thor was always

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"If you don't put all that somewhere first...and sort of simplify it so it's drawable, you'll go crazy."

a good character. And I can't remember the other ones.

HOWELL: Let's see, there's Iron Man, of course (whom you were drawing anyway), and Captain America...

HECK: Yeah, well, Cap was always a good character. He could do almost anything, and yet I liked the fact that he could get hurt. It limits the interest as far as I'm concerned if a guy can't get hurt at all. You know nothing's going to happen to the man.

HOWELL: Just glide through adventures...

HECK: Well, that's why Iron Man in the beginning was good, because of the fact that his battery could drain down, and the guy could be in the middle of something, and have to get the hell out of there.

HOWELL: And then there was Quicksilver. Then The Scarlet Witch.

HECK: Yeah, The Scarlet Witch was good. I enjoyed her. Pretty soon I got to be drawing pretty girls all the time (laughter). I couldn't draw girls at all in the beginning--that was my worst feature--and me a fan of Caniff's! I decided I'd better start learning. I used to love The Dragon Lady and Burma.

HOWELL: That certainly was a good place to start.

HECK: Yeah.

HOWELL: How would you describe a "good script," something that you feel would bring out the best elements in your storytelling? Does it have to have particular elements in it, like lots of action, or particular types of characters?

HECK: A little of each, actually. I mean, obviously there has to be a certain part of a story where you sum up in the end, a good visual beginning, and there has to be some action in between. Otherwise, if there's too much talk, it may look good on television because they can bang one panel after another, or one picture after another, but it won't work in comics. There has to be some action. Nothing is, to me, worse than where the guys are inside one little room talking to one another for four pages, y'know.

HOWELL: So you think comics have their own particular requirements?

HECK: Yeah, definitely, because of the fact that sometimes the writer will put something down, and he visualizes it in four panels, but technically you have to put it in one. There's got to be a good visual flow, and exciting stuff to draw. I never liked drawing buildings or cars or everyday stuff.

HOWELL: You like the weirder stuff, then--outside of the super-hero line?

HECK: I used to like the space opera stuff. "Arrogo from Outer Space" never really turned me on (laughter), because it always seemed to me they were patterned after those Japanese movies where, "Here comes the tidal wave, and it knocks out the whole city." And then you've got to draw the city crumbling and stuff like that. And then "Here comes the Army." Which is terrific, I mean, but if they'd only pay us by the number of figures that we put in, it would be better. It doesn't work that way, though. You're paid on a page rate.

HOWELL: And you indicated that you had done some westerns?

HECK: Yeah, I always enjoyed westerns. I enjoyed the war stuff, only because of the fact that I like to draw characters that are rougher, y'know, where you can put in all kinds of lines and everything.

HOWELL: Seems like that would suit your inking style, too.

HECK: Yeah, I think so. Well, I have a rougher style anyway, as most people have complained about (laughter), because I don't have it as slick. But I think that that's one of the things that was good about Marvel in the 1960s: it was like EC

"They didn't want to tell you that your books were selling..."

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years ago. You looked at one of EC's books, and although there were all different people working there, you could spot who did that book right away. And Marvel came along, and they were doing the same thing: you had Jack Kirby, and you had Ditko, myself, and a few others like that--and they all had different styles, and there was no question on who was doing it. DC at the time had, I think, too many artists who looked the same.

HOWELL: I'd heard that. Gil Kane has a lot to say about it.

HECK: Yeah, I think that comes up with the editorial end. They say, "We want you to draw like this, we want you to draw like that," and I was told at Marvel in the late 1960s, "Why don't you draw more like this?" And I said, "This is the way I draw."

HOWELL: What period was that?

HECK: I think about the time that Steranko got there. He was getting all those letters, y'know. I don't know how well his books were selling, 'cause I didn't even know that about my own, but I know that his stuff was getting a lot of attention.

HOWELL: How do you actually work at breaking down a story?

HECK: Well, it varies. I usually rough-pencil a page and put it on a light-box. Sometimes I just make thumbnail sketches, and sometimes I just draw it straight out.

HOWELL: So it varies quite a bit?

HECK: It varies depending on how I feel, really, is what it amounts to. Sometimes I found myself drawing too much on the underneath board, and not enough on the top one, whereas I get that nice juicy looseness underneath, and then I start stiffening up on the outside and I don't go for it. So then I say, "Well, now I'll just draw it out straight." And I use a blue pencil. I think it's the Venus Color-Erase. I use it because it's easily erasable--it has no grease to it. In fact, they have two of them, a light blue and a dark blue, and sometimes I use them both. I rough in very lightly with the light blue and then I put the dark blue over it. Then I pencil over that.

HOWELL: And what purpose do the thumbnails serve?

HECK: So that you have an idea exactly where everything in the panel is going to go, and what it'll look like printed. You could visualize through the thumbnail, and it could be just a bunch of lines to somebody else, but to you it's a pattern of blacks and shapes.

HOWELL: You get a more abstract view?

HECK: Yeah, and you can visualize it. You're not just looking at words, which can be crazy--especially in, like, one of the FLASH stories where The Flash is changing into his costume in the middle of Times Square as horses are reeling in the background, and a guy is piping a flute, sitting on a statue. That's one panel.

HOWELL: I remember that. (FLASH No. 293)

HECK: If you don't put all that somewhere first, so you start to separate what's going on there--and how you can take what the writer has put down, and sort of simplify it so it's drawable, you'll go crazy. So that's what I do that for. A lot of people do that, they do it even in illustration.

HOWELL: And the different techniques have nothing to do with the different types of stories or anything, just with how you feel that day?

HECK: Yeah. More or less. And as far as technique goes, it also depends--I might run a stint of six months of doing roughs underneath, and then decide, "Well, I got to get a change away from that and do something different."

HOWELL: Do you keep a morgue file?

HECK: Oh, yeah. Been compiling it since the 1940s.

HOWELL: Oh really? That long?

HECK: Yeah. In fact, I've got a lot of strips and stuff. I don't have much on TERRY--I wish to heck I had. I could kick myself for that. I have STEVE CANYON. Luckily, I got into the habit early on of clipping out the stuff I liked.

HOWELL: Are you at all familiar with ON STAGE?

"I think... I...draw better if [I] do the whole drawing."

ER...AS A MATTER OF FACT, MACK... I DON'T! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY?
FIONA SAYS YOU BROKE INTO HER APARTMENT AND TRIED TO KILL HER ABOUT A HALF-HOUR AGO, BARRY-O
--AND TROY SHOWED UP JUST IN TIME TO SEE YOU TAKING A FLYER OUT THE WINDOW!

HECK: Oh, yes, yes. Good stuff. That guy's super. (Leonard Starr) I got a whole bunch of that, too. I used to save all the Sunday pages, and the doilies. That man's a genius--a super talent, no question about it.

HOWELL: Were there any favorite writers you liked to work with during the Marvel days? I guess there weren't as many back then as there are now.

HECK: Yeah, there's so many now, but then there was Roy Thomas, and there was Stan Lee. Those are almost the only ones I worked with. The one nice thing about it, like I said, when they were doing the synopsis was I had the freedom. You'd send these pages in, and then you'd see Stan put the dialogue to it, and it really worked out nice. It was a good combination, because he was great for looking at things, and being able to put stuff in there.

HOWELL: Figuring out what you meant?

HECK: Yeah, well, you put down on the side that such-and-such a thing happened, but he could--it's like the characterization in a person is done with the dialogue--the dialogue has to be written so that it sounds like this is what the guy would be thinking or saying.

HOWELL: So you tried to put in attitudes and expressions that would transmit that...

HECK: I would try to. Y'know, sometimes you're successful and sometimes you're not. It depends on what you're doing. Like I say, I think I had more fun in those days, and that's one of the reasons.

HOWELL: Okay, have you noticed any difference in the visual technique of comics between, say, back in the late 1950s/early 1960s, and what the readers or what the editors are after today?

HECK: Well, the artwork is different, obviously. In a lot of cases the newer fellows throw a lot more panels in. Somebody like...back in the 1950s there was a fellow named Krigstein who worked for EC, and he would panel it bangbangbang, but they would be a sequence job. These days there seem to be a lot of tricky shots--and I guess they're great...if they're selling, I guess that's what the readers want--but I'm more the older style, I guess. Like today they put "multiple-image shot this," "multiple-image shot that." I would rather see multiple panel shots--one after another--where you're getting a real sequence happening, so that you would be able, as you're looking at it, to see that action happening, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5--each in a separate panel. In fact, I got a book here, it's got a job by Kubert in it, doing exactly the same as what I was talking about, five shots in a row--and very small copy in there--and it's a sequence shot, but without trying to throw it all into the one panel and then having a lot of copy.

But all artists want the least amount of copy possible.

HOWELL: Oh, yeah?

HECK: Yeah, well, if there's too much copy, you have no room for drawing the picture--and it's a visual medium as far as I'm concerned.

HOWELL: Do you think that artists and writers might disagree as to that point?

HECK: I'm sure, I'm sure. I mean, a writer is a writer, and he wants to write, and an artist is an artist, and he wants to draw.

HOWELL: And they each want to think they're the most important part?

HECK: Well, it takes two to tango, so there has to be meeting of the minds somewhere.

HOWELL: You've worked with many writers over the part of your long career that I'm familiar with, and with scripts that I would say are of varying quality. Do you find yourself working harder on scripts that aren't up to par, or do you feel that good scripts bring out the best in your art?

HECK: I think that if it's a good script, and I think that if the guy gives you enough room to draw the pictures, and you're interested in it, so it seems like it's going to be fun to do--you draw better. There are certain things you can do if it's a dull

STAY WHERE I AM?
MORTAL FOOL! DRACULA IS NO COMMONER TO BE ORDERED ABOUT BY THE LIKES OF YOU!!
BUT NO--THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM. I MIGHT BE RECOGNIZED!
FAREWELL, HARKER! IT SEEMS LUCK SIDES WITH YOU YET ANOTHER TIME!
THE SUPERNATURAL WAS THE OUTWARD PERSONIFICATION OF POWER--A HUMAN FIGHTING AGAINST POWER, HATED & FEARED!
GIL KANE

page or something like that. You can try to take one panel or something, and pop it up. Sometimes it works, and other times it doesn't, but if the script has something to it where you can get into it--a little meat to it--then it works better. And that would be normal, I would imagine.

HOWELL: Len Starr told me a story about how when he was working in the comics shops back in the early 1950s, he said he was considered one of the better storytellers in the shop, so he kept being given the stories that were dull.

HECK: Yeah, well, that would be normal, too, I guess. I'm not sure if it's always true that way or not--I used to get some stuff when Marvel was doing things (I think it was later in the 1960s) if the book wasn't selling as well, I never knew if mine were considered that good at the time--but that may be because of monetary reasons. In other words, they didn't want to tell you that your books were selling, because you'd be liable to ask for more money.

HOWELL: I remember you got THE X-MEN sometime late in the 1960s, and that was traditionally not a very good seller.

HECK: Yeah, well, I was doing breakdowns on it, I think, at one time...

HOWELL: Right, right.

HECK: ...AND I think it was Werner Roth that was pencilling, and Colletta was inking it.

HOWELL: I remember that.

HECK: I think I did one with Ross Andru, too, if I'm not mistaken. He pencilled it and I inked it. I'm trying to dig the memory a little bit (laughter).

HOWELL: It must have been tough to be working in that sort of atmosphere, in which they wouldn't really tell you whether your work was selling or not.

HECK: Not really. It didn't bother me much one way or another, because all I was interested in is getting jobs I could turn out really well. Y'know, you just figure--after having gone through 1957 where everything took a nosedive--you were happy that you were working regular. That's about what it amounted to. I mean, I wasn't sure that the next time I walked in somebody wasn't going to say, "By the way, we just closed up shop."

HOWELL: Oh, great.

HECK: Especially being that you were now dealing with three or four outfits, rather than twenty.

HOWELL: Yeah, so now if one of them goes...

HECK: It can get you a little more nervous. Like today, you've got DC and you've got Marvel. You may have a few others on the stands, but they're not that big anymore, y'know?

HOWELL: So if one of them closes down, there's going to be a big scramble?

HECK: Yeah. Well, either that or...well, you're dealing with the conglomerates, too, so that makes a big difference, y'know. I mean, they can dicker among themselves and say, "It's not making money. Drop it."

HOWELL: Fortunately, they both claim to be healthy.

HECK: Well, I hope so. I am very happy to hear that.

HOWELL: Do you pencil differently for yourself, for when you know you're going to be inking a particular job?

HECK: Yeah. Lighter. Because when I get it back, I can look at it, and if I see something I don't like, I can just change it. Y'know, in other words, I won't have put that much in at certain points. Certain things I will tighten up, and other things I will leave looser--especially backgrounds. If I'm drawing trees, for instance, I'll just sketch in the shapes. Most of the detail is added in the inking.

HOWELL: Do you ink mostly with a brush?

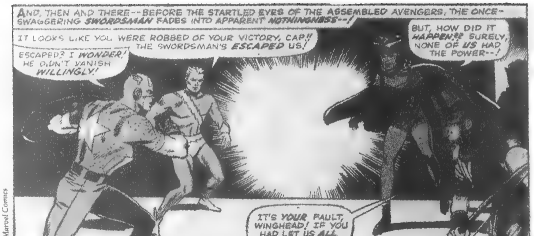
HECK: No, I ink mostly with a pen in fact.

HOWELL: Really?

HECK: Yeah. I use a brush for the juicy blacks that are put on, like the wrinkles and stuff like that. That's all brush.

HOWELL: Looks like a pretty loose pen line on the rest, though.

HECK: Yeah, well, I use different types of pen-


AND, THEN AND THERE--BEFORE THE STARTLED EYES OF THE ASSEMBLED AVENGERS, THE ONCE-SWAGGERING SWORDSMAN FADES INTO APPARENT NOTHINGNESS--!
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE ROBBED OF YOUR VICTORY, CAP! THE SWORDSMAN'S ESCAPED US!
ESCAPED? I WONDER! HE DIDN'T VANISH WILLINGLY!
BUT, HOW DID IT HAPPEN? SURELY, NONE OF US HAD THE POWER--!
IT'S YOUR FAULT, WINGHEAD! IF YOU HAD LET US ALL ATTACK HIM--!
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points. I don't necessarily always use any certain one. I have an Estabrook one that I picked up years ago--in fact, I probably wouldn't be able to replace it--but I got a couple of gross at the time. And it's one (with which) you can put down a real fine line, and you can also dig into it at the same time, y'know. It's a fairly big point. It was called a Professional A-1, and I wish I had bought about four or five more boxes, because they were selling it at Sam Flack's in the city for two dollars a gross (laughter). This was about seven, eight years ago.

HOWELL: That sounds like a pretty good investment.

HECK: Oh, like I say, I wish I had bought about five to ten more boxes. I didn't need pens then--I wasn't inking. I was just buying something, and speculatively at that.

HOWELL: Was the fact that you weren't doing much inking in those days your own choice?

HECK: No, no. I always wanted to ink. In fact, if you'll talk to Len Wein, and ask him about me, you'll find out that I'm forever asking to ink.

HOWELL: Len did mention that story.

HECK: Yeah--and it's true. I would much rather finish my own work. Obviously, if I do that, I'm not going to do as many pages per month, as far as that goes, but I like to get into the characters. I like to work with the whole feeling of the story. And I think you--I do, anyway--draw better if you do the whole drawing.

HOWELL: I'll go along with that.

HECK: Except for--recently I did a job, "Dial 'H' for Hero," and they had a new inker on me...

HOWELL: Dennis Jensen?

HECK: Yeah. And he did a great job?

HOWELL: It looked somewhat like Murphy Anderson's inks.

HECK: Yeah, yeah. But here were a couple pages that I wanted to ink so bad (laughter) that I was sorry to see them shipped off to an inker. But then when I saw what he did with it, I was not unhappy at all. He did a real good job!

HOWELL: You must have a fairly difficult style for an inker to get ahold of.

HECK: I guess so. Remember, though, back in the 1950s, there were some "pencillers" and some "inkers", but it was predominantly that there were artists. There were a lot of people back in the 1950s about whom you could say, "Who could they have gotten to ink this guy?" and you can't think of anybody. You could sit back, for instance, and say, "Who would you get to ink Jack Davis?" Well, you wouldn't get anybody but Jack Davis to ink Jack Davis. Or Joe Kubert for Joe Kubert. Who else are you going to get to ink Joe Kubert?

HOWELL: Mort Meskin, maybe? But I see you point. Name an inker for Graham Ingels.

HECK: Right. Isn't that a change we've seen in the industry--breaking it down into more of a prodution line?

Of course, back in the 1950s, you were doing smaller stories--five pages, like.

HOWELL: I've not seen too many comics from the 1950s, but I have seen some, and some titles, like say, Marvel's BLACK KNIGHT or VENUS--which were by Joe Maneely and Bill Everett, respectively--seemed pretty much like one-man shows.

HECK: Oh yeah, you mean they did the whole book by themselves? Well, they did quite a bit of that in those days. I mean, these days, up at Marvel, Stan used to say that if he could get two or three pencilled books out of you instead of one, pecilled and inked, he'd rather do that because he could always get an inker to ink your pencils. You have to understand--I'm sure their point of view is if the job doesn't quite turn out exactly as high as they want it, as long as it's sort of in between--and it sells--then they're happy.

HOWELL: Well. That's not all that encouraging [Heck laughts], but I guess it makes sense from the publisher's point of view.

HECK: Yeah, yeah, but by the same token as I say, at that point, then you start to get to the point where they all look alike--and that's no good either, I don't think because who cares which book you pick up? They all look like they came out of the same flowerpot.

SO THAT YOU CAN INVADE OUR DIMENSION IN FORCE?! SO THAT YOU CAN ATTACK US WITH OUR OWN WEAPONS? MISTER, YOU GOT YOURSELVES THE WRONG BOY!!
THE HUMAN HAS COURAGE...BUT HE IS ALSO FOOLHARDY! SHOW HIM THAT RESISTANCE IS USELESS!
AT ONCE, YOUR SUPREMACY!

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HOWELL: You think that that's happening? You mentioned before that in the 1960s, there were four or five different artists at Marvel who each had very different recognizable styles.

HECK: Right. Well, it had to happen, because an inker is going to do whatever amount of pages he can do, and he's going to start inking over three or four pencillers, and it's going to start looking very much the same. Because the inker has a certain style, and he's going to take your stuff, and make it look more like his. And then, instead of your having, like, say, myself doing a complete job, and then this inker pencilling and inking another job, and having two different styles, we have one style, and two people doing it.

HOWELL: You had mentioned before that the scratchiness of your inking style was meeting with some resistance?

HECK: Yeah. But I happen to like it. That's why I say I'd be more inclined to have war stuff or things like that. I think it suits my inking more.

HOWELL: How would you describe the difference between your own inking style, which you said was "scratchy," and...

HECK: Well, it's scratchier than, say, some of the new, slicker, styles. Because, like I say, I like Caniff. I was also a big fan of Charles Dana Gibson (from the turn of the century), who used a pen type line. And I just loved that kind of stuff-unfortunately I'm in the wrong era, I guess (laughter). When I say scratchy, I only mean sometimes. It depends. I like to use a lot of bold blacks if I can.

HOWELL: I've heard the term "scratchy" applied to various inkers, including you.

HECK: Well, I was told that, and then I was told by an editor--whom I can't recall now--but he said, "Kubert has the same problem," and I said, "Well, if you put me in with Kubert," I said, "I've got no complaint. Thanks for the kind words. If you don't like his stuff, then I'm not too worried about the fact that you don't think highly of mine." (Laughter)

HOWELL: Kubert has so many artistic drawbacks, really.

HECK: Oh, yeah, sure. He's a fantastic artist. He's got such a solid drawing style, y'know. I mean, it's three-dimensional, but on the other hand, there's very little stiffness in it. And he can draw anything, especially those characters from back in One Million B.C.

HOWELL: Tor?

HECK: Yeah, that's the book, but I mean the mammals and dinosaurs. Fantastic.

HOWELL: Right, right. You'd think he kept some in his backyard.

HECK: Yeah. I don't know what they have in Jersey (laughter).

HOWELL: Okay. You've been a pretty constant presence in comics, since, well, before I started reading them.

HECK: Yeah, I started, like I say, freelancing in March 1952.

HOWELL: And stayed with it, except for that one year?

HECK: Yeah, that's about it. I've been fairly busy ever since.

HOWELL: Have you done much work outside the comic

book industry? It looked like you were ghosting THE PHANTOM for a while...

HECK: I did some of the pencil work on some of that, and I was just doing breakdowns at one point. Funny part is, you feel like you don't have that much of a special style, especially in those jobs where two or three people are going to be going over it--but for some reason or other, your style comes through. Do you know Tiefenbacher, the fellow who ran THE MENOMONEE FALLS GAZETTE?

HOWELL: Yes.

HECK: I was subscribing to that, and all of a sudden they sent me a letter and asked me some questions. They wanted to know how much I was doing on THE PHANTOM because they could tell I was doing some of it. I was amazed. Because you figure nobody could ever tell.

HOWELL: Sorry. It looked pretty distinctively Heck to me, too.

HECK: I remember I did a couple of jobs for John Romita one time, when he was doing those romance books for DC at a time when I was at Marvel--there was no conflict of interest at the time--and I did some roughs, and he tightened them up and inked them. He must have been behind or something. Anyway, you couldn't tell that that work wasn't all his.

HOWELL: Bet I could. I've seen some of those stories.

HECK: (Chuckles) Well, I thought I was submerged. John Romita submerges everybody, because he has that complete kind of a style. That's okay. As long as the guy inking over you is a really good artist himself, there's no complaint from me. When I was doing THE AVENGERS, I had several really good people inking my work. I had Romita, I had Wally Wood. Then around issue 30 or something, I go Giacoia, who is a fantastic inker. He knows anatomy so well, that if you don't have yours up to par, he just slaps it in automatically. That's why some people say, "he's slower," but he's putting more into it. You can't just whip this stuff out all the time. If you're going to make it look good, you've got to put some time into it.

HOWELL: So outside of yourself and Frank Giacoia, who do you like inking your pencils?

HECK: Well, Romita did a good job. Wood did a wonderful job. I guess the one who really came closest to me would be Frank Springer.

HOWELL: Really?

HECK: He did a DRACULA GIANT...(GIANT-SIZE DRACULA No. 3)

HOWELL: Right. I remember those.

HECK: I got the stuff back, and I thought, boy, he did a damn good job. And he likes the same type of pen work I do.

HOWELL: He probably comes right out of the same school.

HECK: Well, if you look at a lot of them, they're almost all around the same age--as older fellows (laughter). I mean you take John Romita, Frank Robbins, who else?

HOWELL: Alex Toth?

HECK: Yeah.

HOWELL: And Mort Meskin, wherever he is.

HECK: Yeah, he's in the same area. You know, you're talking about the guys who did their learning in the late 1940s, early 1950s...

HOWELL: An entire generation of artists?

HECK: Well, what had happened is that these guys were the ones working, and then comics had sort of gone down in the number of books, and there weren't that many publishers, and so the same artists more or less stayed into it. So for a long time, not that many new artists were coming in and the predominant style stayed the same. Occasionally you'd get one or two new artists, but not too many. Of course, some of them would be really good, like John Buscema or Neal Adams, and that sparks the whole field. There's nothing like that. It seems that everything is going along fine, then all of a sudden somebody comes in with a new style that's terrific. I always like to see it, myself, because I like to see something good.

HOWELL: Makes you feel that the field is still progressing?

HECK: And not only that, you look and you say, "I better get my act back into gear," because you start to get a little lazy every now and then, and competition helps.

STEVE SWENSTON'S DEBUT PORTFOLIO

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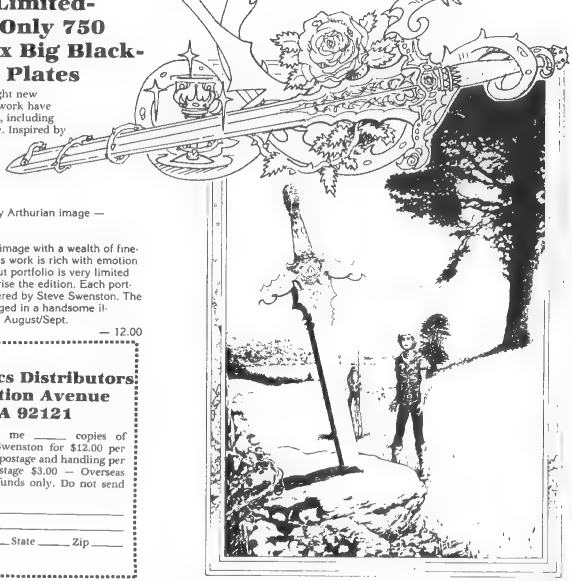

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"...And Justice (League) For ALL!"

by Murray R. Ward

HAPPY TO SEE THE OLD GANG AGAIN, BLACK CANARY!
EVER REGRET THAT YOU CAME TO LIVE HERE ON EARTH-1?
SOMETIMES I MISS MY OLD FRIENDS, AQUAMAN--
--BUT I CHERISH MY NEW FRIENDS JUST AS MUCH, IF NOT MORE...AND THESE ANNUAL GET-TOGETHERS ARE A BRIDGE BETWEEN MY PAST...AND MY PRESENT.
THANK RA THAT THIS YEAR OUR GATHERING HAS GONE WITHOUT UNPLEASANT INCIDENT.
PERHAPS WE'VE CHANGED OUR--LUCK.
LUCK HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT, DR. FATE.
SIMPLE MATHEMATICS.
ANOTHER CRISIS WAS JUST AGAINST THE ODDS!
© 1982 DC Comics

Why a Justice League of America?

In this, which we like to refer to as the "real" world, the answer to this question is obvious: because there was a Justice Society of America and it sold well, so Justice League sells well.

But in the world of the super-hero characters who make up the membership of the Justice League, that world which we have dubbed Earth-1, what is the reason d'etre of the long-established team of champions?

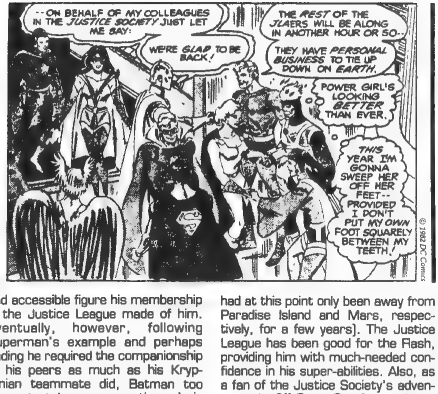
Basically, the Justice League exists to battle threats to the human race that its individual members might not be able to confront successfully alone. These threats may come in the form of invading extraterrestrial aliens, as they did in the case that first brought the heroes together, again in the adventure that caused them to codify their alliance and again in their first appearance as a team. They may come from criminal masterminds possessing powers or inventions of super-endowed crusaders individually. Or they may come from the super-heroes' opposite numbers, the super-villains who emulate the JLA by banding together in a group for a mass attack. These menaces alone constitute enough reason for the Justice League of America to exist in a world where such bizarre happenings as marauding monsters and maniacal mad scientists are the stuff of commonplace existence.

Why, however, do these heroes remain banded together as an organization? New members are forever being asked to join, but the vanguard of the original charter members remains, and of those who have been recruited since the institution of the group, few have departed, and none have left never to return. While the Justice League heroes may appear very much alike at first glance, they are actually very individual and different characters; thus, their reasons for joining and remaining with the Justice League differ from member to member.

Superman, first and most beloved of super-heroes, was far from a regular participant in the early cases of the Justice League, although at the time, he was unaware of the similar behavior of his Earth-2 counterpart as regarding the Justice Society. In more recent years, however, he is an extremely active member, using his mighty powers and Kryptonian science to help create the JLA satellite and link it to the equally awesome resources of his Arctic Fortress of Solitude. Superman today sees the Justice League as a "home-away-from-home", where he can be surrounded by his peers and equals and not have to play the all-conquering hero and god-figure he represents to the non-super-powered masses. Granted, he is regarded as "first among equals" due to his long career, extensive experience, and greater powers, but still, with the Justice League Superman is just one of many super-heroes, not the sole super-hero in a world of ordinary people. In the bottle-city of Kandor, a shrunken surviving community of his destroyed home planet of Krypton, before it was re-

enlarged and relocated on another world, Superman could again be an ordinary citizen of Krypton among fellow Kryptonians, but at the expense of his super-powers; as Clark Kent, he can be an ordinary citizen of Earth, but at the expense of close relationships which might jeopardize his secret identity. Only with the Justice League can the Man of Steel be at ease among friends who share his secrets and his occupation. As we know, the future-dwelling Legion of Super-Heroes served this very function in the life of the teenaged Superboy. But while the Legion was made up of youthful heroes and heroines who could never betray his trust, dwelling as they did in a distant time-era and who, like Kal-El, each possessed one or more in-born super-powers, the Justice League at its inception was an organization of earthly present-day crimefighters, any of whom could one day turn up in Metropolis to give away Superman's secrets and many of whom had little or no actual powers. It took Superman some time to come to trust the new team as he had his Legion comrades, and to interact with the others as he did with his one close friend among the initial membership, the Batman.

Batman, second in experience only to Superman among the charter members, was among the first to see the value in a coordinated front among the super-powered heroes, perhaps inspired by his own work with similar organizations of law-enforcement such as Interpol. He himself, however, was a reluctant participant in the early League, though for different reasons than Superman. With the exception of his boy partner, Robin, and occasional cases undertaken in tandem with Superman, Batman was and is a loner. The very basis of his crimefighting career is his solitary state since he was inspired to become the Batman when he was orphaned by a criminal's hand as a young boy. Also, his reputation was that of a shadowy and mysterious figure of the night, striking fear into the hearts of his enemies in his dark-cowled disguise, in the fashion of one of his boyhood heroes, the Shadow. For quite some time, Batman was understandably reluctant to forego his status as a man of mystery in order to do greater good as the more public


--ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE JUSTICE SOCIETY JUST LET ME SAY:
WE'RE GLAD TO BE BACK!
THE REST OF THE JLAERS WILL BE ALONG IN ANOTHER HOUR OR SO--
THEY HAVE PERSONAL BUSINESS TO TIE UP DOWN ON EARTH.
POWER GIRL'S LOOKING BETTER THAN EVER.
THIS YEAR I'M GONNA SWEEP HER OFF HER FEET--PROVIDED I DON'T PUT MY OWN FOOT SQUARELY BETWEEN MY TEETH
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and accessible figure his membership in the Justice League made of him. Eventually, however, following Superman's example and perhaps finding he required the companionship of his peers as much as his Kryptonian teammate did, Batman too began to take a more active role in League affairs, especially after his own partner, Robin, became the founder of the JLA's self-appointed "junior arm", the Teen Titans.

Despite the fact that his powers are those of super-swift motion, the Flash finds himself the stalwart core of the early Justice League. A mere neophyte as a super-hero and a longtime hero-worshipper himself [as a boy, he idolized the original Flash, a comic-book character on Earth-1], Flash summoned the more experienced Superman and Batman to deal with a situation he himself could not handle [in the flashback in **Justice League** No. 144], and thus instigated the formation of the League. But when the team actually began to operate, Flash found himself its unelected leader, in the sheer absence of anyone better suited to the task. Superman and Batman, as has been noted, were often absent from the early meetings; Green Lantern was even newer at the super-hero game than Flash; and the others were hardly comfortable enough in the milieu of everyday life on Earth to deal with the responsibilities of leading the super-team besides [Aquaman, due to his dependence on water, spent most of his time at sea, and later in his master's homeland of Atlantis; Wonder Woman and J'onn J'onzz had at this point only been away from Paradise Island and Mars, respectively, for a few years]. The Justice League has been good for the Flash, providing him with much-needed confidence in his super-abilities. Also, as a fan of the Justice Society's adventures in **All-Star Comics**, being a member of the Justice League is like a dream-come-true to the boyish speedster, second only to his discovery that the original Flash and the JSA are actually real people and inhabitants of a parallel world.

Like Superman, Wonder Woman relieves her basic need to be among super-powerful equals by being a Justice League member, although she must settle for a team of male heroes rather than a group of powerful females, such as her sister Amazons on Paradise Island. Still, the early League is remarkably free from the male chauvinistic attitude Wonder Woman would find prevalent among the males of Diana Prince's world of military and civilian personnel and she is treated as an equal with no reference to her gender. Years later, when she is temporarily bereft of her Amazon powers, Wonder Woman immediately leaves the JLA, feeling she no longer has a place in the team, despite the presence of non-super-powered members such as Batman and Green Arrow, thus reaffirming that she is a member only to be amongst her peers; once she is no longer a peer in terms of powers, she resigns her membership. Likewise, when she regains her powers but finds that her memories of her powerless period are indistinct, she

requests a trial period during which her cases are monitored by a rotating group of JLA members before she considers herself competent and worthy of rejoining the League.

Aquaman begins his Justice League career as a regular attendee, adding his expertise in watery environments to each of the team's far-ranging assignments. He realizes that the constraints of his particular powers do not render the most useful member on every case, but he nonetheless contributes to each encounter and balances his relative ineffectiveness out of water by often being the only member who can act to save the entire group in special situations. With his assumption of the kingship of Atlantis, however, and his marriage to the extradimensional merwoman, Mera, Aquaman finds himself with less and less time to devote to the Justice League. As the self-proclaimed protector of the Seven Seas, Aquaman is plainly a hero who enjoys assuming and wielding responsibility and the Justice League gives him an added outlet for his gallant tendencies, until the duties of his throne preclude his regular involvement.

J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter, is the moving force behind the institution of the Justice League, as it is his presence and that of his Martian enemies on Earth that causes the various super-heroes to unite for the first time [again, in the flashback in **Justice League** No. 144]. His had been a lonely and solitary existence on Earth prior to the establishment of the League, which, even more so than for Superman [who knew he could never return to destroyed Krypton] or Wonder Woman [who could return

MY FRIENDS, ALL THIS IS VERY WELL... BUT YOU FORGET, THIS CRISIS AFFECTS EARTH-PRIME AS WELL AS EARTH-X.
WHAT WILL IT GAIN US TO SAVE ONE WORLD, IF WE LOSE ANOTHER?
I THOUGHT GREEN LANTERN, ADAMRAND AND KATANNA WERE HANDLING THAT ENDY
© 1982 DC Comics

to Paradise Island at will], provided him with a home and friends to whom he could divulge his secrets. Indeed, since only his fellow Justice League members knew that the seemingly-human John Jones was really a green-skinned Martian alien and accepted him as such [until he later abandoned the Jones identity and acquired his extra-dimensional sidekick, Zook], it was only at Justice League meetings that J'onn J'onzz could truly "be himself" during his time of exile on Earth. It was a tearful farewell for both the Manhunter and his teammates when he finally departed to search out his people, who had fled into space to colonize a new homeworld after the destruction of the original Martian civilization.

Hal Jordan had no inkling, when he became a pivotal player in the battle of the not-yet-formed Justice League and the Martian invaders, that a few months later he himself would be both a super-hero, as Green Lantern, and a charter League member. Green Lantern, in his early career, was very much the most brash and even egotistical of the members of the JLA, and [especially in the perennial absence of Superman from early cases] took great satisfaction in saving the day with the abilities of his Power Ring. The JLA provided GL with another source of ego-bolstering to add to his pride in his abilities as a test pilot, a ladies' man, and the favorite "son" of the Guardians of the Universe. In later years, when his personality had mellowed somewhat [following the ego-shattering events of **Green Lantern** Nos. 76-89], he would look on the Justice League more as friends and comrades and less as an admiring audience for his feats. In fact, it is fellow member Green Arrow who is most responsible for his change of character, a change that might never have come about without their interaction as JLA members.

As for those members who joined the Justice League after its formation, the team and its meetings and organizational requirements provided each with essential elements otherwise missing from his or her existence.

To young honorary member Snapper Carr, the Justice League members are his idols and role models. It is significant that his closest friends on the team include Flash, a fellow star-struck hero-worshipper, Green Arrow, the "new kid" when he becomes the first new member to join the group, and the Atom, whose tiny size, like Snapper's non-costumed

GOSH, ISN'T THIS WHERE--?
QUITE RIGHT, YOUNGSTER.
BY THE END OF THIS WAR, FRONT WILL BE KNOWN AS THE PENTAGON!
BUT JUST NOW, IT'S SERVING ANOTHER USE--
--AS DEGATON'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS!
14
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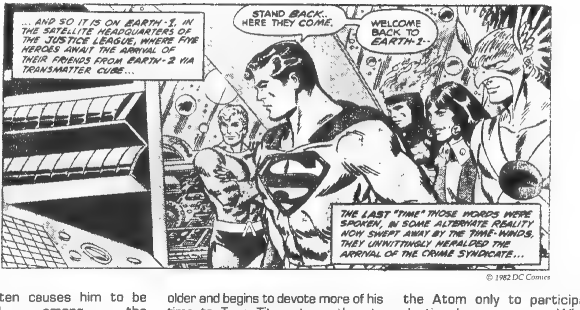

...AND SO IT IS ON EARTH-1. IN THE SATELLITE HEADQUARTERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE, WHERE FIVE HEROES AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF THEIR FRIENDS FROM EARTH-2 VIA TRANSMATTER CUBE...
STAND BACK... HERE THEY COME.
WELCOME BACK TO EARTH-2...
THE LAST "TIME" THOSE WORDS WERE SPOKEN, IN SOME ALTERNATE REALITY NOW SWEPT AWAY BY THE TIME-WINDS, THEY UNKNOWINGLY HERALDED THE ARRIVAL OF THE CRIME SYNDICATE...
© 1982 DC Comics

status, often causes him to be overlooked among the conglomeration of colorful crusaders. Unlike the other members, Snapper is still an adolescent and his "growing pains" as he approaches adulthood eventually contribute to an increasing rift between him and his elder comrades, culminating in his leaving the ranks. His departure also signals the end of the mountain headquarters for the team and the institution of new and more responsible methods of operation, including the satellite base and the continual monitor shifts. It is as if when Snapper grew up and left the League, the League also grew up, to the point where a returning Snapper no longer truly fits in, except as an occasional guest.

Engaged in another case which took him back to the deserted island of his origin at the time, Green Arrow was the lone super-hero existent at that point to miss the gathering (in **Justice League** No. 144) that eventually resulted in the JLA's formation. Thus, his admission as the first new member is merely the correction of an earlier oversight. Nevertheless, he is flattered by the offer and figures prominently in many cases for the first few years of his membership. Eventually, though, he comes to feel that he can do more good for humanity as businessman and financier Oliver Queen than as the costumed Green Arrow, many of whose attributes, in the context of the Justice League, seem like mere echoes of the talents of Batman, especially after the Caped Crusader begins to take a larger role in JLA affairs. As his young aide Speedy grows older and begins to devote more of his time to Teen Titans team then to cases undertaken alongside his mentor, Green Arrow all but disappears, with the Justice League remaining almost his only link to the world of super-heroics. With the loss of his business and personal fortunes, however, Oliver Queen's effectiveness is greatly diminished and the Ace Archer returns to action in his costumed identity full-time both alone and as a Justice League regular. The JLA serves to restore his shattered confidence in himself at this point and also introduces him to the great love of his life, the beautiful Black Canary.

The Atom, like Green Lantern, becomes a Justice League member very early in his super-hero career, but like Green Arrow, he is genuinely flattered by the invitation to join, although he harbors some initial doubts about the effectiveness of a six-inch-high crimebuster fighting in tandem with such powerful heroes as his normal-sized teammates. Like Aquaman, he comes to realize that his special talents are not suited to every JLA adventure, but that there are times when only his powers can prove efficacious against the villain of the hour. Since Ray Palmer had originally become the Atom not out of any burning desire to combat crime, but merely to help resolve the criminal cases in which his lawyer girlfriend, Jean Loring, became involved (since he reasoned the more quickly Jean proved herself in her profession, the sooner she would agree to marry him), he would, like Green Arrow, don the colorful costume less and less often over years, eventually becoming the Atom only to participate in Justice League cases. When his fellow members must come to his aid to help save Jean from not one, but two perils too great for the Mighty Mite to handle alone, he too suffers a crisis of self-confidence, but it is likewise his fellow JLA heroes who pull him through his doldrums. The Justice League figures very importantly in the Atom's life, indeed: it is them to whom he turns for advice as to whether he should reveal his secret identity to Jean before their marriage, and it is they who make up the largest part of the guest-list at the eventual wedding.

Like Superman and J'onn J'onzz, Hawkman and Hawkgirl are aliens on Earth, originally hailing from the planet Thanagar. After Hawkman's induction, the JLA functions as second home for him, as it does for the other extraterrestrial members and like Green Arrow and the Atom, he too becomes more active over the years as a Justice League member than as a solo super-hero. His alien technology and knowledge are of prime importance in designing the orbitting headquarters for the group, especially the "transporter beam" method of egress to the space satellite. Unlike the Martian Manhunter, who tended to rely on his more muscular Superman-like abilities in JLA adventures to the neglect of his more esoteric talents, Hawkman often found himself calling on skills seldom used in his solo cases to solve problems which baffled the other members. When his tour of duty on Earth turned into an enforced exile, first due to a planetary quaran-

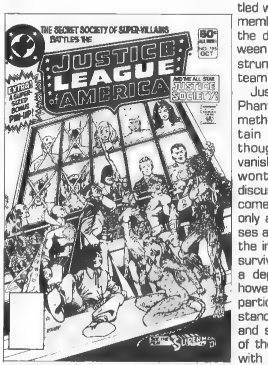
tine, and later because of a revolution on Thanagar, Hawkman depended more and more on the Justice League to give him a feeling of belonging. It was this intensity of feeling that led him to propose an amendment to the longstanding tradition that had kept his wife, Hawkgirl, from joining him on team missions, with the result that Hawkgirl also was made a League member.

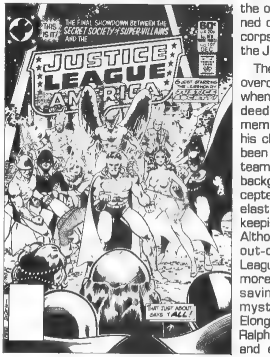
The Black Canary too regards the Justice League as her adoptive home, since its members took her in after her bereavement and abandonment of her original life on Earth-2, where she had been a member of the Justice Society. Too, the League provided her with the companionship and understanding of Green Arrow who would replace her late husband as the man in her life. Black Canary's feelings for the Justice League, however, are equal to or even greater than her attachment to GA; when the archer became temporarily disgruntled with the League and resigned his membership, she remained, despite the disagreements this caused between the two and eventually was instrumental in his decision to rejoin the team.

Just as not much is known of the Phantom Stranger himself or his methods of operation, so little is certain about his never-expressed thoughts regarding the JLA. He vanishes without warning, as is his wont, while the members are discussing his admission after he had come to their aid on a case and later only attends meetings when he senses a magical threat in the offing and the inability of the Justice League to survive without his help. One detects a degree of ride in his demeanor, however, when he does choose to participate in the group. In one instance, he unaccustomedly speaks up and suggests the traditional division of the team into sub-groups to deal with the current menace, and when the other heroes express their stunned disbelief at his sudden esprit de corps, he replies, "I **am** a member of the Justice League, am I not?"

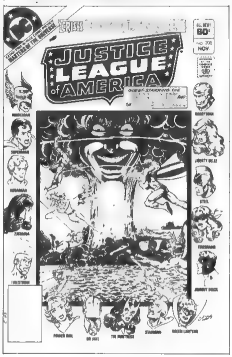
The Elongated Man had been a long-overdue addition to the JLA ranks when he was finally asked to join. Indeed, he had been proposed for membership several times, mostly by his close friends, the Flash, but had been passed over by the assembled team most probably because of his background as a performer who accepted payment for the use of his elastic abilities, an activity not in keeping with the rules of the League. Although he often feels somewhat out-of-place among the Justice League heroes, who as a group are more given to undertaking world-saving missions than solving mysteries (the latter being the Elongated Man's preferred forte), Ralph Dibny is so much the exuberant and effervescent character (in the JLA tradition of Snapper Carr) that he treats the JLA as a sort of elite club of which he is a member and participates on the level of being "one of the boys" rather than attempting to take himself too seriously as a champion of justice. One tends to suspect him of being the team's unofficial social director in their spare moments of recreation: who else would think to organize a late-night poker game aboard the satellite?

Like Black Canary, Red Tornado is





IT'S THE MOST SENSATIONAL SHOWDOWN OF ALL TIME! BUTTERFLY! COMMANDO! JOHNNY NET! THE SQUADRON SUPREME! VERSUS THE...
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA



GENEVA, SWITZERLAND:
I HOPE WE'VE GOT THIS FIGURED RIGHT, POWER GIRL!
WE'VE ONLY GOT THIRTY MINUTES LEFT UNTIL DESAATOR'S DEADLINE--
--AND THEN HE'LL FIRE HIS REMAINING MISSILES AT LONDON, BERLIN AND MOSCOW!
THAT THOUGHT HASN'T LEFT MY MIND FOR A MOMENT, COMMANDER!
ANY LUCK WITH THAT RADIATION DETECTOR OF YOURS, FIRESTORM?
NOT A BLEEP PS!
COULD BE THE MISSILES ARE SHIELDED!
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originally an inhabitant of Earth-2 and an extradimensional refugee in the world of the JLA. Even before his transferral from the parallel planet, however, he had been a loner among his fellow super-heroes, as an android gifted with human feelings and searching for his "place in the sun" among true humans. The Justice League, with its regular meetings and continual schedule of operation, unlike the more sporadically organized present-day Justice Society to which he had formerly belonged, gives Red Tornado his needed feeling of worth and belonging, as well as his first true friends. Also, it is through his association with the Justice League that he has taken on the full attributes of humanity: an everyday identity, a companion of the opposite sex, and even an adopted child. Whatever doubts the android hero may have about his own humanity, the Justice League members know him as their most self-sacrificing comrade, for "greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends", and this the Red Tornado has done more than once.

As the Justice League grows larger and larger, so much more awestruck must each new recruit be upon being asked to join the team. So it has been with the two latest members to be admitted at this writing, each of whom has attributes in common with the Elongated Man. Zatanna, like Ralph Dibny, had been active for several years before her invitation to join and had shared adventures with several of the members. So anxious was she to prove herself worthy of the honor that she inadvertantly overused her magical powers during her first months of membership, causing them to be diminished permanently. An infrequent super-heroine when only a lone crusader, Zatanna has become much more active since her induction and the awareness of her responsibilities brought on by her membership. Firestorm, on the other hand, is like the Elongated Man in his youthful zealousness and irrepressibility. His Justice League appointment, coming fairly early in his heroic career, like those of Green Lantern and Atom, has served to bolster his self-confidence as well as enabling him to benefit from the greater experience of his elder comrades.

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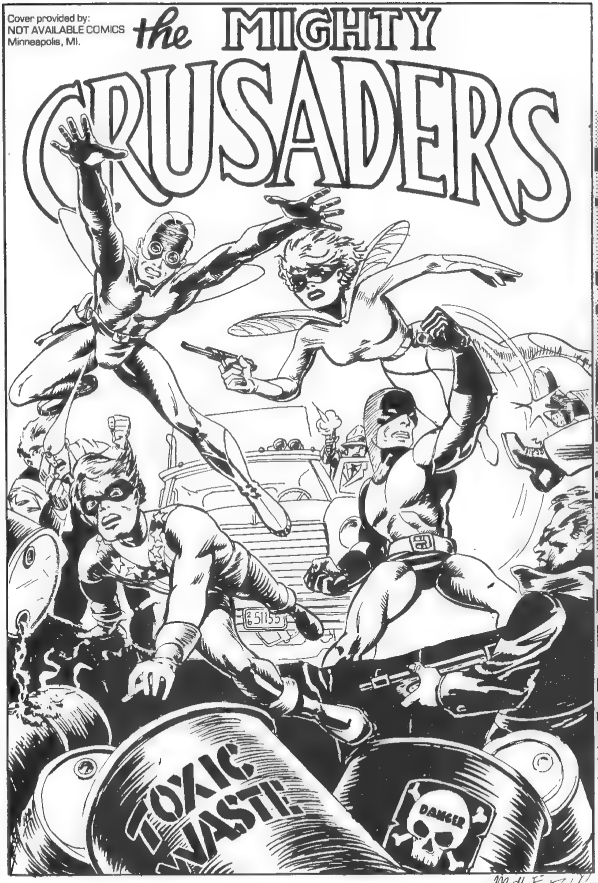
Thus, the Justice League of America is all things to all super-heroes, and means something slightly different to each member, while being an important part of the lives of all.

Finally, we must ask: why the name "Justice League of America"?

Longtime JLA editor Julius Schwartz has suggested that the team was christened a League, suggesting a large and complex organization (e.g. the League of Nations, predecessor of the United Nations), as opposed to a Society, like its Earth-2 counterpart which suggests a more social gathering, as in fact the JSA has tended to be.

And as for the use of the term "Justice" ... ? While our heroes may be called upon most often to defend the world from invading aliens, power-mad geniuses, and costumed super-villains, many of their most memorable adventures have resulted from their struggles to uphold concepts far beyond simple law and order, such as providing hope to the handicapped (in **Justice League** No. 36's "Case of the Disabled Justice League"), aid to victims of racial discrimination (in No. 57's "Man, Thy Name is Brother"), and a shining example to a world often in need of a guiding conscience (in No. 40's "Indestructible Creatures of Nightmare Island").

Truly, above all else, they **are** a **Justice League** of America!



Who says ya need to wear a costume to be a menace ?

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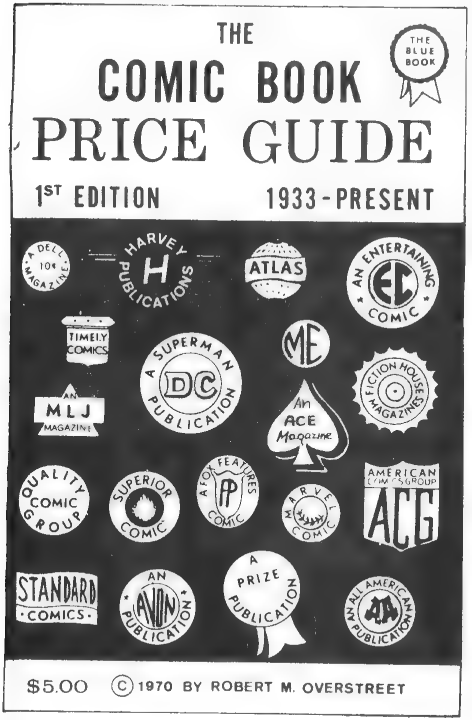
1970

A Guide for the Seventies

by Don & Maggie Thompson



1970 wasn't much of a year, historically. If you check the first **People's Almanac**, you'll find 1970 has one of its shortest listings, as far as major public occurrences go. In February, the Chicago Seven were convicted of conspiracy to cross state lines and start a riot, not to mention contempt citations arising from the trial; all charges were eventually dropped. The Cambodian "incursion" began in April, and in May four students were killed at Kent State and two at Jackson State in the course of student anti-war protests. It was a year of disturbances for what the year's census counted as 203,211,926 Americans. But the year wasn't marked by turning points—just continuations of trends.

Except in comics fandom.

In comics fandom, a force that made comics fandom what it is today was initiated.

As we told you in our last column, the belief that comics prices had stabilized resulted in work on a guide to the average prices at which used comics were selling. The first edition of Robert M. Overstreet's **The Comic Book Price Guide, 1933-Present,** with a cover price of $5, was published in 1970.

Actually, the work which went into the saddle-stapled book covered many years before that. Fans had worked for almost a decade in "organized" fandom (a non-existent concept, but you get the idea) to find out what comics had been published. Any fans who wanted to collect a title often had to go by consensus as to whether it even existed. The non-distribution of **Whiz** #1 and **Shock Illustrated** #3 were facts that only hard-core fans with contacts in the industry had in fandom's earliest days. The Dell Special Number series did not have a simple list that collectors could consult to determine what titles they were looking for, whether they were collecting that series as a whole or, say, **Tarzan**. You can imagine the problems in collecting that could—and did—arise.

And, suddenly, here it was: a complete index to **all** comics, a handbook that took no "insider's" knowledge to use. Anyone could collect whatever he was interested in and know exactly what it was he was collecting—and even what he might expect to pay to complete it.

PETER PARKER (See The Spectacular Spider-Man)

PETER PAT (See Single Series No. 8)

PETER PAUL'S 4 IN 1 JUMBO COMIC BOOK
No date (1953)
Capitol Stamles

	Good	Fine	Mint
1 Contains 4 comics bound: Space Adventures, Space Western Comics & Justice Racket Squad in Action	12.00	24.00	36.00

PETER PENNY AND HIS MAGIC DOLLAR
1947 (116 pgs., paper cover; regular size)
American Bankers Association. N. Y. (Giveaway)

nn (Scarce)-Used in *Seduction of the Innocent*, pgs. 310, 311 — 6.00 | 12.00 | 18.00

Another version (7¼x11") redrawn, 16 pgs., paper cover — 6.00 | 12.00 | 18.00

PETER PIG
No. 5, May, 1953 to No. 6, Aug., 1953
Standard Comics

5,6	1.50	3.00	4.50

PETER PORKCHOPS
Nov.-Dec., 1949 - No. 61, Sept.-Nov., 1959; No. 62, Oct.-Dec., 1960
National Periodical Publications

1	10.00	20.00	30.00
2-10	5.00	10.00	15.00
11-30	2.50	5.00	7.50
31-62	1.50	3.00	4.50

PETER POTAMUS (TV)
January, 1965 - (Hanna-Barbera)
Gold Key

1	1.00	2.00	3.00

PETER RABBIT (See Large Feature Comic No. 1)

PETER RABBIT
1922 - 1923 (9¼x6¼") (paper cover)
John H. Eggers Co. The House of Little Books Publishers

81-84 (Rare) (Set of 4 books which came in a cardboard box). Each book reprints ¼ of a Sunday page per page and contains 8 B&W

That was a catch we'll return to in a moment.

If you've never done such a thing, you have no idea of the problems that can arise in any indexing—the massive quantity of sheer **time** it takes to produce a usable bulk of correct information. We saw the huge notebook Jerry Bails carried to each convention, filled with comic titles and prices and annotations—and Jerry was only **one** of the people who helped to provide the enormous amount of data that was distilled into a useable price guide. [He was, however, Associate Editor of the 1970 guide.] If you still think it sounds simple [and today's word processors would make such a project **easier** but by no means **simple**], look at a page of this year's **Price Guide** and imagine how you'd go about filling it with the information that's there for you to use any time you need it. You could attend a convention each weekend for a year and still not come anywhere near producing the handy, compact reference work Bob Overstreet comes up with annually.

There were, of course, errors in this first edition; there are probably errors in this year's edition, a dozen years later. The first edition, for example, said that there were two issues of **Whiz** #2 [one that was really #1 and one that was numbered #2 and really was]. The **Spirit** Sunday sections weren't even listed. Overstreet's introduction included the following passages:

PETER WHEAT (The Adventures of)
1948 - 1956? (16 pgs. in color) (paper covers)
Bakers Associates Giveaway

	Good	Fine	Mint
nn(No 1) Stales on last page: end of 1st Adventure of Kelly-a	25.00	70.00	105.00
nn(4 issues)-Kelly-a	25.00	50.00	75.00
5-10-All Kelly-a	20.00	40.00	60.00
11-20-All Kelly-a	15.00	30.00	45.00
21-30-All Kelly-a	12.00	24.00	36.00
31-40	9.00	18.00	27.00
41-66	8.00	16.00	24.00

NOTE *Al Hubbard art No. 34 on written by Del Connell*

PETER WHEAT FUN BOOK
1952 (32 pgs., paper cover, B&W w/some color) (8¼x10¾")
Bakers Associates

Contains cut-outs, puzzles, games, magic & pages to color	12.00	24.00	36.00

PETER WHEAT NEWS
1948 - No. 30, 1949 (4 pgs. in color)
Bakers Associates

Vol. 1-All have 2 pgs. Peter Wheat by Kelly	30.00	60.00	90.00
2-10	20.00	40.00	60.00
11-20	10.00	20.00	30.00
21-30	6.00	12.00	18.00

NOTE *Early issues have no date & Kelly art*

PETEY (See Peter the Little Pest)

PETTICOAT JUNCTION (TV)
Oct.-Dec., 1964 - No. 5, Oct.-Dec., 1965
Dell Publishing Co.

1	1.00	2.00	3.00
2-5	.50	1.00	1.50

PETUNIA (See 4-Color No. 463)

PHANTASMO (See Black & White No. 18)

PHANTOM, THE
1939 - 1949
David McKay Publishing Co.

In the past there has been a lot of confusion as to pricing books by condition. It is my sincere hope that the Price Guide will help in this regard.

Everyone connected with the publication of this book advocates the collecting of comic books for fun and pleasure, as well as nostalgia, art, and cultural values. Second to this is investment, which, if wisely placed in the best quality books (condition and contents considered), will yield dividends over the long term.

Comic books with little or no value have been left out of this edition, but will be included in future volumes if and when their value increases. Some titles listed are incomplete, especially in regard to first and last issues, but this will be remedied in future editions as the information becomes available.

It was impossible for someone to know all about all fields, so we find a listing for **Katie Keene** (rather than **Katy Keene**). We find the following titles [listed in the current edition as having been published before the first edition] omitted from that portion of the list: **Peter Gunn, Peter Pan Treasure Chest, Peter Paul's 4 in 1 Jumbo Comic Book, Peter Penny and His Magic Dollar, Peter Pig, Peter Potamus, Peter Wheat Fun Book, Peter Wheat News**, and **Pete the Panic**. And some titles that are listed don't have entries nearly as complete as the detailed coverage you'll find in the current edition, twelve years later.

All that just serves to indicate that the editor was constantly working to make his book reflect the current state of comics collecting. There's no doubt about it; if the job of compiling the first edition was a mammoth one [and it was], the job of keeping it up to date had to be at least as enormous, with an ever-increasing size. [The first edition had 218 pages of listings in reduced typewriter type. The 1982 edition has 363 pages of listings—in very compact type, indeed, with many more lines per page.] Even if no discoveries of additional old titles were to be made, new issues of current comics would keep the informational lists growing.

Robert M. Overstreet and his aides changed comics collecting.

It used to be that comics fans could find, even with magazine publicity of the mid-Sixties, that there were places where cheap prices for old comics could be found. Little second-hand shops, rummage sales, and flea markets existed in which people cleaning out their attics disposed of stacks of old comics for a song and were glad to do so. But all at once, anyone could have on hand a pricing reference work—and almost **no** one read it carefully enough to see that Overstreet cautioned them that this was only what **some** collectors would pay for **specific** conditions of **particular** titles.

What was intended as a **guide** became tantamount to price-fixing in some areas, through no fault of Overstreet's. Given the choice of three prices for a comic book, some thrift-shop owners would, of course, choose the highest—and maintain the issue [in ever-worsening condition] at that or higher prices for years, since their clientele wasn't comics oriented, anyway. Some comics dealers would hoard recent issues of popular titles and refuse to sell them at **any** price until the latest edition would advise the highest price that could be asked.

What was an attempt to **average** prices became, for many dealers, the **fixed** prices. For mint condition comics, the prices seemed to go up steadily each year.

And fans blamed Overstreet.

He became at the same time a household word (in fannish households, at any rate) and an object of some fans' scorn. "33% off Overstreet!" ads read—and the meaning is clear to the buyer at once.

He has even been chastised by fans of some titles, because, they say, he doesn't price these titles high **enough**—though the lower the price listed, the lower the price they'll have to pay to complete their collections. The rest of us wince every time another of our favorites is suddenly given special attention—with concomitant raises in price. Overstreet's prices are the topic of conversation at every con immediately following each year's publication of the annual.

We doubt—we very much doubt—that he saw in 1970 that all this would come to him. Would he have gone ahead with the project, if he'd known he was going to produce a work with which each reader would have **some** quibble? ("How **dare** you price **Bingo, the Monkey Doodle Boy** at only $8 in mint condition?!" "What do you **mean** my good condition copy of **Avengers Annual #7** dropped a quarter in value?!" "How can you cover-feature my favorite comic? Now I'll never be able to afford to complete my collection!")

Over the years people have focused on the pricing and ignored the advantage of being able to buy an incredible compendium of up-to-date information. In doing so, fans ignore that the listing of prices is what has made it possible for Overstreet (and the ever-increasing list of people who help him with information) to provide an annual list of all the mainstream comics ever published.

Without the prices—providing countless additional sales—there could have been no annual edition. There would have been no impetus to add to and correct what was already published. There wouldn't have been sufficient annual motivation to update and correct what was there. It's all very well to say that **someone** should undertake this sort of project. It's quite another to do it—and do it well.

Overstreet has done it well.

In the early days, too, there was consternation over the pricing. How could he possibly handle the fact that some dealers grossly overpriced their wares, while some people sold collections at a loss. Overstreet solved the problem by automatically eliminating the highest and lowest price he could find on each item. How could he deal with comics in different conditions for each number, since every issue of every number didn't go on sale in three different conditions each year? Overstreet solved it by careful estimation, judging it by how similar items were selling. What issues were made more collectible by virtue of special features that attracted particular fans? Bob began including more and more information about each title.

In an effort to maintain as accurate a picture as possible of what is happening in the collecting field, he has even taken out ads to advise fans when a particular issue, for some reason, has taken a spectacular change between installments of his list.

Bob Overstreet has, in short, taken on a massive assignment and has dealt with each problem as it arose. He has produced the standard work in a field filled with critics and has constantly worked to improve it, while other guides come and go (some with information taken directly from his copyrighted work, some with information taken from specific ads in an issue or two of an advertising tabloid).

In short, what began in 1970 as a modest little handbook done by and for fans turned into a book nationally distributed to the book trade by Crown. Its influence has been steady, and its attention to detail has been meticulous. Before its publication, want lists were filled with question marks. After its publication, people knew what they were collecting and the budget they should set aside for it.

It changed the world of comics collecting.

* * *

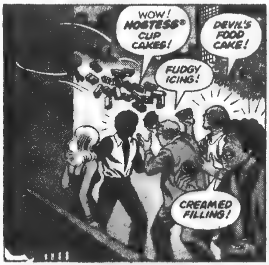
Next: More from 1970

COMIC GOURMET

Twinkle Twinkie Little Star...

A Review of the Various Super-Hero Endorsed Hostess Ads.

By Bob Soron



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Eclipse Magazine—

A Review of Its First Year.

With Daring And Variety, Eclipse Has Established Itself As A Quality Magazine.

By Brian Nelson

Twinkle Twinkie Little Star...

by Bob Saron

ADVERTISEMENT
THE HULK VS. THE PHOONIE GOONIES
A MAILMAN! WHAT A GREAT OUTDOORS JOB TO APPLY FOR! NO ENEMIES, EXCEPT A YAPPING DOG, OR TWO!
BUT MAILMEN ARE CIVIL SERVANTS, THERE'LL BE QUESTIONS··FORMS··TESTS
STAMPS PARCEL POST SPECIAL DELIVERY
WE ARE THE PHOONIE GOONIES!
YOU'RE ALL NOW HOSTAGES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT!
WHAT LOUSY TIMING, OH NO! I FEEL IT HAPP...
YOU MAKE HULK AMSAY! HULK SQUEEZE YOU INTO SIZE OF ENVELOPE··THEN MAIL YOU THROUGH "OUT-OF-TOWN" SLOT!
NO, HULK! DON'T! GIVE 'EM OUR HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES!
WE SURRENDER FOR FRUIT PIES!

© 1982 Marvel Comics

The scene: the DC panel at Chicago-Con, 1981. A comics enthusiast is called upon by Paul Kupperberg. The fan stands and, after a couple of random comments, asks for news of upcoming Hostess ads. The few snickers are drowned out by the applause.

It's hard to say whether the interest in the Hostess ads is due to their own merits of whether they're caught in the renewed interest in silly comics. It's probably a little of both, since it isn't particularly new; I remember JulyCon 1977, having an all-night conversation about Hostess ads with the dozen or so folks I was rooming with. (That was, as far as I know, the origin of the concept of Earth-Twinkie, an alternate Earth with super-heroes much like those with which we are familiar—but an Earth on which Hostess products play a large part in the clash between super-good and super-evil.) But there does seem to be more of an interest in those ads for various super-heroes' endorsements of the innate righteous powers of creme-filled sponge cake.

Why? It's a heck of a question. For one thing, in this age of multi-part epics, the Hostess ads are virtually the only place where you're guaranteed to get a super-hero story complete in one bite—uh, story. With the limited length in which the Hostess-ad writers have to work (a maximum of ten panels), a bad story is readily apparent. Someone who cannot tell a story that is not only coherent but also entertaining in that length probably will not last long at the job. (The ads are written, it is my understanding, by Hostess people, and edited afterwards by the various publishers of the characters involved. For reasons I cite later, I believe the same person writes ads for the various companies.) Of course, in such a small space, there's barely room for a beginning and an end, let alone a plot—the result of which is that even the most reasonably-conceived stories can turn out to be quite bizarre.

From a marketing standpoint, the ads can be effective for all companies involved. In Hostess' favor, their ads' format ensures that younger readers will read them, since they are indistinguishable from the general look of the editorial package. Since the heroes involved never win without the aid of the pastry of the month, the pastry is

shown to be on the good side, in more ways than one. From the comics companies' standpoint, the Hostess ads give their characters extra exposure, and probably gain them a few new readers in the process. (This was especially true until recently, as both Archie and Harvey carried Hostess ads that featured Marvel or DC characters.)

This year, Marvel's ads, on the whole, were more interesting than DC's. For instance, the November 1980 Marvels featured *"The Power of Gold!"*, starring Mister Fantastic versus Imperfecto. Imperfecto was actually an amoral alien who needed gold to survive, hence his fondness for Hostess Twinkies (which are made of golden sponge cake). Mr. Fantastic stopped the alien from robbing a gold exhibit via a Twinkie distraction, which seemingly arrives out of nowhere. But then, so did Imperfecto.

Terrorists were fairly popular this year in the Marvel ads. In December of 1980, Iron Man faced a gang of bank robbers who were holding the bank's employees prisoner. When the robbers demanded that food be sent in, Shell-Head sent in Fruit Pies, causing the robbers to throw aside their weapons as they ran for the snacks. In June, the Armored Avenger faced the Rhinos, robotic rhinos who attacked Fort Knox. Iron Man distracted the men controlling the hostile horn-wearers by tossing them golden Twinkies. Then, in October, the Hulk faced the Phoomie Goonies, members of a revolutionary government who started their take-over in a rural post office. This ad was particularly notable because the fruit pies were not used to stop the villains (who, due to a Hulk bear hug, had already surrendered) but rather to stop the Hulk.

The popularity of electronic games with the comics audience was apparent in two Marvel Hostess ads: in May, the Thing faced Space Invaders (who were actually coming to Earth to get Fruit Pies). Two months later, Spidey faced the Human Computer, "an evil genius with an atomic brain." He caused all the computers in Manhattan to malfunction —"worst of all, the fun has gone out of the kids' electronic games." The story featured a number of puns on the word "chip" as used in micro-electronics, giving the story a sophistication one would not ordinarily expect from Spider-man. (It turned out that the Human Computer was "just a chip who loves" the chocolate in Hostess Cup Cakes.)

In January, Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. crossed over into a *"Captain America"* adventure that, had it been a feature story, might not have passed the Comics Code, as the villain was not captured at the end. Cap used Fruit Pies to distract the Trapster's goons from strangling Fury, but by the last panel, Cap and Fury had only begun to chase the Trapster.

Hostess went "new wave" in February, as Daredevil met Johnny Punk. Punk was going to use his high-frequency sound waves to "lock [the audience's] brains," until DD traded Fruit Pies for the band's freedom. This was actually the second anti-music ad; the Hulk once killed the "Roller Disco Devils" by wrapping a street around them (like a Hostess Ho-Ho).

The next month's ad wasn't quite punk, but the villainess (an unnamed woman with a "supersonic hair dryer") had a B-52 bouffant. The Human Torch used Cup Cakes to make her drop her weapon (which was not the bouffant).

The Human Torch's other solo outing was rather similar. Thugs were robbing an orphanage telethon. When the Torch attacked, the robbers used a fire hose to extinguish him. The Torch recovered when he saw the robbers stopping to take Twinkies from the orphans. (This instance was one of the few times when the pastry of the month has been only an indirect influence on the outcome of the story.)

In August, the Torch—along with the rest of the F.F.—used his powers in a slightly more interesting manner, in one of the very few ads to have no villains. The F.F., on a camping trip, went canoeing down a river when a rockslide threatened Franklin's Fruit Pies. Each F.F. member (except Franklin) used his super power to save the tarts.

Spider-Man was involved in a couple of interesting rescues. The first was another example of the pastries being incidental the resolution of the story, as Web-Head rescued a kidnapped child. He gave the boy Twinkies to keep him busy while he mopped up the kidnappers. In December, Peter Parker was on a date with Lisa Skye when a gang pushed him into a river and attempted to rape Skye. Spider-Man tossed them Cup Cakes, which they clearly preferred.

Most of the Marvel ads showed the heroes using their individual powers, however unimaginatively. The captain America/Nick Fury team-up had Cap flinging his shield. When the Torch met the B-52, he used his power only for flying; there were not flame effects. Finally, when Iron Man encountered the bank robbers, he used his armor to crash through the door—nothing unique to him. In the *"Rhinos"* story, he fared better, as he used his repulsor rays, albeit ineffectively. Spider-Man, in his appearances, used his webbing in fairly standard ways—primarily blinding criminals. Daredevil did use his radar sense to determine that Johnny Punk really had enough electricity to fry kids' brains. The Hulk and the Thing each used their strength, and in his solo appearance, Mr. Fantastic stretched a lot

EXCITING BARRAGE OF TWINKIES
RECAPS AND PIECES
TO FOLLOW
OBOY!OBOY!

I MUST TELL THE TRUTH... DELICIOUS, GOLDEN SPONGE CAKE! THE CREAMED FILLING! YUM!
YOU GAVE YOURSELF AWAY, ROBOT-MASTER ... NO ROBOTS DON'T HAVE TO EAT!
TOO BAD FOR THEM THAT MEANS MORE TWINKIES CAKES FOR US...
PERHAPS WE CAN BE ON PROGRAMMED TO ENJOY HOSTESS TWINKIES CAKES TOO!
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS TWINKIES CAKES

© 1982 DC Comics
© 1982 Hostess

WHERE ARE WE?
I DON'T KNOW BUT I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THESE UNDERSEA ALIENS.
ALIENS ??????
WE LIVE BENEATH THE SEAS OF YOUR OWN PLANET--EARTH
WE CAN PROVE IT --LOOK!
HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES! REAL FRUIT FILLING. APPLE, AND CHERRY--MY FAVORITE.
AND THE LIGHT, TENDER CRUST I LIKE SO MUCH.
FRUIT PIE
APPLE
OUTER SPACE HAD A LOT OF INTERESTING THINGS TO SEE...
BUT ONLY EARTH HAS HOSTESS FRUIT PIES TO EAT.
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES
© 1982 DC Comics

The DC Hostess ads were rather disappointing, due primarily to an inordinate amount of repitition in the choice of characters used. Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman each got three stories. The other four covered by this review featured Flash, the Red Tornado, Aquaman, and—the lone non-Justice Leaguer—Plastic Man.

Two of the *"Superman"* stories featured villains. In June, however, the Man of Steel rescued some kids who had gotten trapped in an abandoned gold mine. Seeing their disappointment at not finding any gold, Jimmy Olsen gave them, yes, golden Twinkies. (If it works with bank robbers and gold-seeking aliens...)

One of the other *"Superman"* stories had a pair of villains who were conspiring to destory weather satellites, hoping to force TV stations to come to them for the weather forecast. (The villains' names, incidentally, were "Tara Cobal" and "Fortran." Between this and the *"Spider-Man vs. the Human Computer"* story, it would seem that the anonymous writer of these strips is a computer hobbyist.) Since Cobal and Fortran were in the S.T.A.R. Labs, Superman didn't want to attack directly and risk the destruction of the equipment, so he tossed in some Twinkies and caught the duo while they were distracted.

MORE TWINKIES

Finally, in August, Superman encountered the Laughing Gas Bandits (who had put you-know-what into a cigar billboard in Metropolis). This time, Superman was prevented from taking direct action because the gas was spiked with Kryptonite. Superman, however, dressed up as a Hostess deliveryman and used his tray of Fruit Pies to distract the bandits long enough to capture them. (The Earth-Twinkie Metropolis must have rather lax pollution laws...)

All three of Batman's stories featured costumed villains. The first had the League of Assassins from some 1970s *"Batman"* stories; here the League was demoted to a trio of Kung Fu experts. The three of them were almost a match for Batman, until he tossed them some Twinkies.

A few months later, the Darknight Detective enountered the Midnight Ladies, who would steal anything dark and valuable. When the Midnight Ladies invaded Gotham's oil supply, they found Hostess Cup Cakes waiting for them—and that wrapped the case up.

Batman also used Cup Cakes to stop the Crime Director, a criminal who went through so much effort to make his robberies look like movie productions that he could not possibly have made any profit on his crimes. This was another indirect use of the pastry, as Batman tossed the Cup Cakes to the Crime Director's henchmen, but took care of the Director on his own.

Wonder Woman, in her first Hostess adventure of the year, met the Chocolate Baron, who was out to monopolize chocolate. The ending of this one is fairly easy to guess.

"Old Gold," a few months later, was more interesting. The Borrower evidently enjoyed being around gold, but realized that he couldn't get any without being in big trouble. His solution was to hang around Egyptian tombs, snatching purses. Wonder Woman came in and used her well-known power of turning into solid gold in order to attract the Borrower—at least the Twinkies she was holding attracted his attention. She lassoed him and tied him away.

Wonder Woman's other story was one of my favorites of the year, in which she

met the Robot Master (note another instance of computerization). The Robot Master had created four perfect duplicates of himself; when the Amazing Amazon showed up and they started to run, she tossed them all Twinkies. They bounced off the robots' chests, since they didn't need to eat—but as Wonder Woman led the real Robot Master away, the robots hoped they could be reprogrammed to enjoy Twinkies.

Of the remaining four strips (oddly enough, at the end of the year DC did not run Hostess ads for four consecutive months) the *"Aquaman"* and *"Plastic Man"* strips were the best. True, the *"Flash"* story was somewhat droll, with the Bureauc-Rat, a former traffic official who lost his job in a budget cut, but found the money to develop a red-tape ray gun. The Flash literally ran circles around the Bureauc-Rat, tossing him Fruit Pies in the meantime to destroy his timing. The *"Red Tornado"* story, however, started nowhere and stayed there, as he trapped the Vacuum Thief by clogging his vacuum with Cup Cakes.

But the *"Plas"* and *"Aquaman"* stories —*they* were clever. Plas showed up at the Glittering Gottrox Ball, where the final course of the dinner was gold—yes, they were actually serving gold for dessert. Plas formed himself into a serving tray, with a covered dish on him. Needless to say, once the crook struck, we discovered that the gold on the tray was actually Twinkies, which stopped the crook long enough for Plas to form himself into a scooter, on which he brought the thief to jail.

Aquaman's story involved no crime. A landed space capsule had sunk instead of floating. The astronauts were convinced that they had landed on a watery world, but the ever-resourceful Mera proved that they were on Earth by serving (soggy) Fruit Pies.

To wrap this review up—preferably in cellophane—it seems appropriate to eulogize the Hostess ads, as they seem to have gone to that big delight in the sky. Even I would not consider them "good comics art," whatever one's definition of that may be. I *would*, however, argue strongly that they were frequently more entertaining than they had any reason to be, and considerably more entertaining than we readers had any reason to expect. They were fun while they lasted, and that's what entertainment is all about.

AND SUPERMAN UP DERE CAN'T TOUCH US 'CAUSE DIS LAUGHIN' GAS IS SPIKED WITH KRYPTONITE! HA, HA, HA.
HE'LL JUST HAVE TO FOIL SOME OTHER CRIME FOR NOW.
DERE HE GOES NOW! LET'S GET DOWN DERE, ROB EVERYONE AND SPLIT... BEFORE HE GETS BACK.
YEAH, LET'S GO GET OUR JUST DESSERTS!
SPEAKIN' OF DESSERTS, HERE'S A HOSTESS SALESMAN FALLIN' ALL OVER HIMSELF AND SPILLIN' HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES EVERYWHERE.
SO DON'T JUST STAND THERE LOOKIN' STUPID ...LET'S RELIEVE HIM OF HIS DELICIOUS BURDEN.
HA, HA
YEAH, DELICIOUS, HA, HA.
BOY, I LOVE DESE HOSTESS FRUIT PIES.
DAT'S CAUSE OF THE LIGHT TENDER CRUST. YUMM!
MAYBE IT'S 'CAUSE OF THE REAL FRUIT FILLING IN APPLE AND CHERRY. DIDJA' EVER THINK OF THAT?
DIDJA' EVER THINK I'D CATCH YOU THREE SO EASILY?
WHA??? SUPERMAN IN DISGUISE... IT AIN'T FAIR.
ENJOY THOSE HOSTESS FRUIT PIES, BOYS. WHERE YOU'RE GOING YOU MAY NOT GET ANY MORE FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES
® HOSTESS IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF CONTINENTAL BAKING COMPANY
1981 CONTINENTAL BAKING COMPANY

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ECLIPSE MAGAZINE – A REVIEW OF ITS FIRST YEAR

BY Brian Nelson

ECLIPSE

Dean Mullaney's bold publishing foray, **ECLIPSE** Magazine, advertises itself as "the future of comics." On the financial level, it may be that indeed. Published on a more durable paper than standard comics magazines, distributed through the collectors' markets, **ECLIPSE** makes a point of according its writers and artists full rights to their work. **Marvel Comics** has already started to follow their lead, and **DC** may be giving the matter more thought as well.

However, the extreme eclecticism of Eclipse's format may prevent it from assuming the vanguard position in any comics revolution. The contents of any issue of **ECLIPSE** runs the gamut from sf to satire to superheroes to surrealism. Their continued success will depend on the existence of a sizable number of fans with remarkably broad tastes, or with enough devotion to one creator or genre that they don't mind shelling out three bucks to buy the rest of the magazine. Whether such a market is out there or not, I don't know. I'm sure they're finding out.

Another problem that could prevent **ECLIPSE** from building a substantive audience is its tendency to serialize stories in episodes too short to carry the reader forward. Trina Robbins' multi-part adaptation of Sax Rohmer's **DOPE**, for example, ran in four-page segments each issue, and the first few issues were published only quarterly. Despite Trina's charmingly eloquent style, uniquely suited to the period of Rohmer's novel, it became next to impossible to follow each episode without digging up back issues to recall even the characters' names.

Finding the right length for certain stories remains an obstacle for the editors and creators. The Chris Browne-Trina Robbins story in issue 1, "Loose Hips Sink Ships," is a delightful one-page vignette. But "Because," a George Pratt-Kent Williams piece in issue 3, also ends after one page, having said not much at all. As the earlier issues of Marvel's **EPIC** amply demonstrated, it's hard to pull off one-page vignettes without engaging in the trivial.

Most distressing of all, issue 2 featured a McGregor-Graham collaboration, "What's the Little Blond-Headed Guy Doing Here?", an innovative and witty piece which abruptly ended after only three pages. An exhaustive search of the magazine turned up no clues indicating whether or not the piece would continue. An attempt at a brief slice-of-life scene emerged as an experience akin to attending a museum where only the top halves of paintings were exhibited.

However, the preceding qualms do not mitigate the fact that the quality and quantity of talent on display in each issue of **ECLIPSE** is wondrous. Leading the pack is a series which could indeed chart part of the future of comics, Don McGregor's "Ragamuffins". These honest, poignant tales of growing up in the American 1950's, illustrated with delicacy and insight by master craftsman Gene Colan, are work which should make all those associated glow with pride.

McGregor and Colan detail a world filled with both wonder and repression, a world in which all things are possible but most things are frowned upon, the world of the '50's. Issue 3's tale, "Kindergarten Runn," por-

trays a 5-year-old ragamuffin whose fantasies of heroes clash with the practical folk of the real world. A denouement shows that, in 1968, as a young man, he still faces the conflict. His co-workers trample on his fantasies (in this case, doing the unthinkable: defacing an issue of Jim Steranko's **SHIELD**), and look askance when he gets upset. What else should he have expected, the story asks with an understated pain.

The second Ragamuffins tale, "Recess, Bondage, and Nuns" (what a title), appeared in **ECLIPSE** 5, and followed the same formula. A young boy in a Catholic school finds himself tying a female classmate to a tree under the direction of another boy, but he alone receives punishment from the nuns. Years later, he seems to feel the heavy hand of the nuns' justice again when discovering his girlfriend may be pregnant. These quiet, poignant sages speak eloquently of influences which have changed our lives, and it is to be hoped that McGregor and Colan don't stop here.

The Englehart-Rogers collaboration, "Coyote," is **ECLIPSE**'s second strong series. After inaugurating the book with "Slab," a thoroughly bizarre reworking of a plot originally intended as a Superman-Creeper team-up, this masterful team swung into high gear with "Coyote." Although the chapter cut-offs are occasionally awkward, "Coyote" is a unique series, one of the most off-the-wall superhero concepts in years.

Coyote, a space-shifter and shape-shifter in one, is abetted by the animalistic senses and agility one would expect from someone raised in the desert by a were-man and a psychic vampiress, someone suckled as a child on bottles of radioactive milk. Coyote is an unsettling amalgam of man and beast, of civilization and wilderness, as he hunts down the criminal Shadow Cabinet. Coyote is virile, daring, most sly and a breath of fresh air.

In contrast, **ECLIPSE**'s third series banks heavily on the appeal of tradition. "Ms. Tree," by detective strip pros Max Collins and Terry Beatty, features a woman private eye bent on avenging the mysterious death of her husband. The storytelling is simple and direct, relying on one's love of the genre to involve the reader. If one lacks a heritage of reading Chester Gould and Milton Caniff strips, problems may arise.

Single-shot stories, however, have been one of **ECLIPSE**'s perennial strengths. Memorable items in the first issue included "Death," a witty and droll segment by Howard Cruse, and "The Chimera," a haunting captionless episode produced by graphic poet Craig Russell. **ECLIPSE** 2 featured Steve Leialoha's Rick Rabbit in a fast-paced frolic titled, "Kleptos from Outer Space," and a Rick Geary one-pagger called "Crime in the City," which can only be described as delightfully banal.

The second issue also ran the first half of a Steve Gerber story satirizing the inhibitions of a network censor. "Role Model" looked promising, but in its second half in issue 3, the plot degenerated into a revolting fantasy of mind-numbing. The classic Gerber weirdness won out over the Gerber instinct for storytelling.

That issue, though, was redeemed by Hunt Emerson's anarchic "Large Cow Comix", Kaz's inventive "Vamp Dance," and Charles Vess' enigmatic fable, "A Bag Full of Dreams." Hunt Emerson and Rick Geary returned in the fourth issue to work longer madnesses, joined in good company by Don McGregor and Billy Graham with yet another portrait of regular guys, "A Fistful of Graveyard Dirt."

In sum, the daring and variety of **ECLIPSE** stand head and shoulders above other graphic story magazines. If occasional creative and editorial bugs, indigenous to all new publications, can be worked out, it may become a leading force in the industry. Yet it's the fans who will determine that. Let's hope they're not all out buying G. I. JOE.

NORMALVISION
ZIPPYVISION
LET'S MAKE SOME POPCORN, DORIS AND DISCUSS MY DENTAL CAREER!!
OH, ROGER!!
LET'S PERFORM MINOR SURGERY ON WOODCHUCKS AND PASS OUT ON AN OAK-LAND STREET CORNER!!
OH, ZIPPY!!

MAKING SENSE OF THE SENSELESSNESS

by Bryan Uhlenbrock

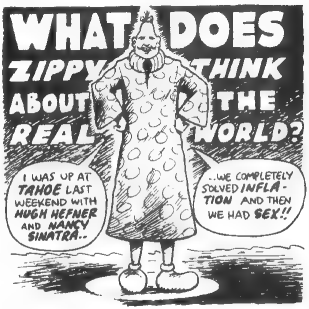
A Review of ZIPPY #1-3 and YOW #1&2 by Bill Griffith.

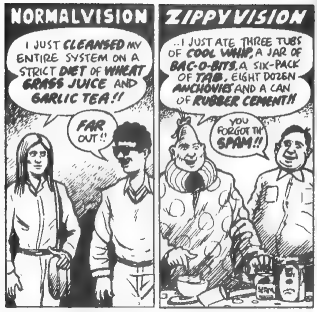
There's got to be some reason for it. A pinhead clad in polka-dots just doesn't become a culture-hero for no reason at all. Especially a pinhead that appears in underground comics and sex-ad newspapers. Nonetheless, there he is: fronting punk-rock bands ("Zippy and the Pinheads," from Austin, Texas), appearing on television (*VIDEOWEST*, courtesy of the Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre), and running for president (brought to you by the American Political System). YOW! Is he committed yet? Or are we?

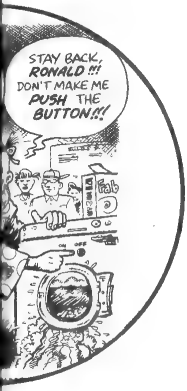
Zippy's creator, Bill Griffith, has advanced several theories in attempts to explain the prodigal pinhead's popularity. "Humor is the 'unity of opposites'", he states on the back cover of *ZIPPY #1*, "and you!! Zippy!! You are the embodiment of that phenomenon!!" In *ZIPPY #3*, the explanations continue: "Zippy is ideal candidate for presidency...he is a role model for the eighties." "He's not 'with it'—he *is* 'it'!!" In my own opinion, Zippy's popularity can be attributed to a much simpler factor. As the popularity can be attributed to a much simpler factor. As the presidential pinhead has stated on several occasions: "I AM HAVING FUN!"

Satire is a chancy thing. It is both a powerful weapon for social change and a loaded revolver pointed straight at the satirist's head. When aimed correctly, the results can be as timeless as Swift's *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*," when aimed carelessly, we have a throw-away commodity on the level of *MAD* magazine. With Zippy, Griffith has attained a combination of both. His satiric points are as easily grasped as those in *MAD*, yet the opinions he espouses are as dangerous and as unpopular as those of Swift.

It is one thing to say that we are a consumer-oriented culture; but it is quite another to suggest, as Griffith does in *ZIPPY #2*, that Madison Avenue intends to turn us into "A Nation of Pinheads." It is permissable to say that the political


WHAT DOES ZIPPY THINK ABOUT THE REAL WORLD?
I WAS UP AT TAHOE LAST WEEKEND WITH HUGH HEFNER AND NANCY SINATRA..
..WE COMPLETELY SOLVED INFLATION AND THEN WE HAD SEX!!


NORMALVISION
I JUST CLEANSED MY ENTIRE SYSTEM ON A STRICT DIET OF WHEAT GRASS JUICE AND GARLIC TEA!!
FAR OUT!!
ZIPPYVISION
I JUST ATE THREE TUBS OF COOL WHIP, A JAR OF BAC-O-BITS, A SIX-PACK OF TAB, EIGHT DOZEN ANCHOVIES AND A CAN OF RUBBER CEMENT!!
YOU FORGOT THE SPAM!!



system is corrupt; but it is libelous to say, in print, that the newly-elected President of These United States is a microcephalic who is controlled by organized crime. Griffith gets away with it, just barely, by disguising his social criticism with a heavy dose of senseless silliness. In *YOW* #2, for example, Zippy sees the spirit body of Eddie Fisher ordering a chicken taco...visiting a casino, he puts a Polish sausage on 16 Red...he installs a skee-ball lane in his bathroom...and he careens through the United Nations Delegate Lounge in his 1958 Rambler. He also goes for the gusto, legally changes his name, is elected president, and gets depressed, just as normal people do. Amazingly he accomplishes all this in one "story"—"Zippyvision." Disjointed as his adventures frequently are, they usually make a disturbing sort of sense.

Anyone who insists on arrow-straight continuity in their comics would be well-advised to avoid Zippy. In one story, he's a circus side-show freak; in another, he's a counter-boy in a doughnut shop. Or a drug-runner. Or President of the United States. He goes everywhere, he does everything...and from all appearances, he doesn't have a dime to his name. Senseless? Certainly. Meaningless? Not by the hair on his chinny-chin-chin.

Griffith's intention (if I may be so bold as to infer his motives by examining the content of his work) is to point out the senselessness of much of modern society. Zippy, then, is a distorted version of ourselves; a fun-house mirror held up to the insantiy of the world we live in...his mind is filled with RVs, laundromats, Liberace, and Cool Whip. His only motive is self-gratification. His perceptions may be incorrect, but he never realizes it. He is Everyman in a clown suit. To my mind, the amazing thing is not that he was elected president...but that there is still a nation left to govern.

Is he assassinated yet?

FUN iDEAS
THINGS TO DO WITH ZIPPY
WHAT SHOULD WE DO TODAY, ZIPPY? I'M BORED WITH MY PRESENT LIFESTYLE!!
LET'S KIDNAP AN 82-YEAR-OLD MILLIONAIRESS, SHOW HER A GOOD TIME IN MINNESOTA, THEN LEAVE HER IN A GREYHOUND BUS STATION WITH TWO PINK WIGS AND A BOX OF PAMPERS!!

JULIUS SCHWARTZ

And the Comics of the Fantastic

I WISH I COULD BE SURPRISED AT MY FINALLY KNOCKING OFF THE FLASH--BUT I FORESAW IT HAPPENING THIS WAY--AND THERE WAS NOTHING EITHER OF US COULD DO TO PREVENT IT!

There have always been strong links between the fields of science fiction and comic books. Ever since Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's creation of Superman, SF fans and writers have been bringing the ideas from the field into comic books--in turn an extension of an even earlier trend in the comic strips that began when Phil Nowlan was persuaded to turn the hero of his pulp stories into the still-popular strip hero Buck Rogers. There's also a large overlap between comic fandom and SF fandom, of which comic fandom was originally an offshoot--and science fiction pros like Alfred Bester, Henry Kuttner, Otto Binder, Edmond Hamilton, Samuel R. Delaney, Harlan Elison and many more have written for comic books. Several comic book editors, including Mort Weisinger and Ted White among others, also had an SF background--but the most outstanding in the field, in terms of the amount of influence that background had on his comic book work, was Julius Schwartz.

As one of the earliest members of SF fandom and later a successful literary agent in the field, Schwartz reportedly never read a comic book until he was offered a job at DC in 1944, referred by such friends as Weisinger and Bester who were already working there. He has remained there ever since: an editorial term unsurpassed in comic books. His earliest assignments were books that had been developed by other people: the "Justice Society of America" series [in ALL STAR COMICS] and the titles most of its individual members appeared in. I believe, in fact, that he handled all the books originally published by M. C. Gaines and editorially directed by Sheldon Mayer--with the exception of WONDER WOMAN and SENSATION COMICS, which were largely the responsibility of Mayer himself, and later of Robert Kanigher. It was in this capacity that Schwartz was first introduced to The Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, and The Atom--all of whom he was later to revive in new versions.

For that matter, not all the science in either the Schwartz or Feldstein titles was entirely in step with known-scientific fact, even in the early 1950s. Neither

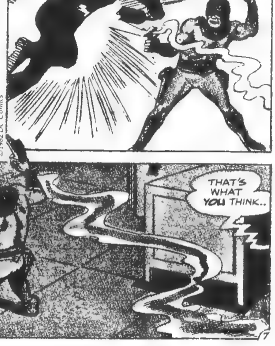
editor was adverse to twisting science for the sake of dramatic impact—the "non-mammalian" Martian woman in WEIRD SCIENCE #19 who still had immense breasts, and the man in STRANGE ADVENTURES #95 who woke up one morning to find that his solar energy plant had kept a gravitational ray from bringing his house along with the rest of the Earth, were involved in stories whose plotting was far better than their science. Even so, both editors paid at least lip service to scientific fact and principles in their magazines, and in the process both produced a great many memorable stories.

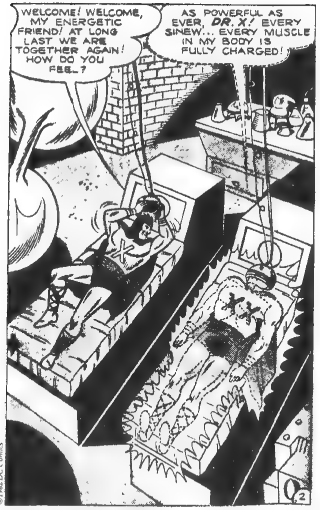
The main difference between the DC and EC science fiction, then, lay not so much in their basic subject matter as in their approach to that subject matter. Al Feldstein himself was the head writer on WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY, but the titles also contained stories by Ray Bradbury, Harvy Kurtzman, Otto Binder, and possibly at least one by Harlan Ellison. The stories concentrated heavily on people, and often on the darker side of human nature—a side extending even to people of the future and to aliens, whose hostility to Earthmen Feldstein was fond of comparing to the treatment Terrans themselves often gave the "lower" animals. In many ways, they weren't that far removed from the horror titles Feldstein also edited, after all. Although a great admirer of Bradbury (whose first story, he was always proud to tell fans, he was responsible for selling), Julie Schwartz preferred a more optimistic slant in his magazines. Written by Binder, Walter Gibson, Ed Herron, Henry Kuttner, Sid Gerson, Edmond Hamilton, Manny Rubin, and especially by the two pillars of Schwartz' writing staff for many years, Gardner Fox and John Broome, STRANGE ADVENTURES and MYSTERY IN SPACE did not deny the existence of evil among both aliens and Earthmen—but it was always opposed by heroes with more idealistic motivations, who usually triumphed in the end. In essence, these comics focused on "problem" stories—in which the hero was presented with a problem he had to solve, often by recalling some scientific fact. Such problem stories had been DC's stock in trade for many years, but the scientific background made them particularly appropriate for these titles.

But when the super-hero boom of the Golden Age began to abate after World War II, Schwartz and the other DC editors found themselves assigned to develop a wider variety of features for the company. STRANGE ADVENTURES first appeared in 1950, and was one of the first, perhaps the first comic book devoted exclusively to (primarily non-series) science fiction. It proved successful, and was soon joined at DC by another Schwartz title, MYSTERY IN SPACE. Thereafter STRANGE ADVENTURES featured science fiction stories set on Earth, while MIS concentrated on outer space settings. Although both featured series from time to time, it became clear very quickly that the series were not the strong point of either magazine. Indeed, the non-series stories remained the primary selling point of STRANGE ADVENTURES until long after the Schwartz era, and not until late in the 1950s did they lose their preminence in MIS.

Curiously enough, few other companies followed suit with comic books exclusively devoted to science fiction. This was probably due to the confusion in the minds of the publishers, editors and writers with another burgeoning genre: fantasy/horror stories. Most other publishers combined both fields in the same titles, and occasionally maintained a high quality in such combined titles (as Richard Hughes did in the ACG line) but more often produced hybrid comics with few memorable stories. Indeed, even the DC attempts at horror/fantasy titles, such as HOUSE OF MYSTERY and TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED, originally featured a great deal of SF, most of it as undistinguished as its actual fantasy.

The only purely science-fiction comics whose success, either on the stands or in fandom, approached that of Schwartz's pair for DC were the two published by EC: WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY, both edited by Al Feldstein. As the latter title indicates, even they didn't entirely distinguish between the fields of science fiction and fantasy—and, in truth, that's often hard to do. If "fantasy" is taken in its broadest sense, the genre in-


TWO—ONE—ZERO! YOUR NUMBER IS UP— JUST AS THE FUTURE-MIRROR SHOWED!
HA, HA! I DESTROYED FLASH COMPLETELY! I BLASTED HIM OUT OF EXISTENCE!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK...
©1960 DC Comics


WELCOME! WELCOME, MY ENERGETIC FRIEND! AT LONG LAST WE ARE TOGETHER AGAIN! HOW DO YOU FEEL?
AS POWERFUL AS EVER, DR. X! EVERY SINEW... EVERY MUSCLE IN MY BODY IS FULLY CHARGED!
©1982 DC Comics

cludes all fiction not set in the real world of the present or past, including science fiction. Even defining science fiction as dealing with possible scientific developments and fantasy as dealing with the impossible leads to difficulties—as Anthony Boucher has observed, at the current state of human knowledge werewolves are more likely to exist than time machines, yet the former are usually considered "fantasy" and the latter "SF".

Whether this approach was more successful than Al Feldstein's at EC is open to question. The EC adherents are more vocal, but unquestionably at least part of their enthusiasm is due to the high quality of art in the EC titles, which boasted the talents of Al Williamson, Wally Wood, Frank Frazetta, Joe Orlando and many other top-quality artists. Although the DC titles had some good artists of their own [Carmin Infantino, Gil Kane, Sid Greene, Sy Barry, Murphy Anderson, Alex Toth and others] most of them hadn't yet reached their peaks, and at the time they seemed to be forced into more of a standard style than the EC artists were. The more character-oriented style of Feldstein and his contributors also has its adherents, but the SF magazines were never great successes—they ceased publication in the mid-1950s, and reportedly were not great sellers even before the EC line was seriously cripped by Comics Code difficulties. Both DC titles, on the other hand, lasted past Schwartz's relinquishing of them in 1964, so evidently their optimistic "problem" stories had fought a large audience.

The scientific background as the basis for a story reached its purest formula in two issues of SHOWCASE that appeared in the late 1950s. Subtitled "Adventure on Other Worlds," they featured the exploits of an Earth archaeologist, Adam Strange, who found himself teleported by experimental "zeta-beams" to the planet Rann and there used his knowledge of Terran science to battle monsters, criminals, and invading aliens on that planet of Alpha Centauri. He fell in love with Alanna, a scientist's daughter, but was unable to marry her because the zeta-beams were always wearing off, returning him to Earth at the most inconvenient times. The SHOWCASE didn't sell well enough to give Adam his own book, but he did become the new lead feature in MYSTERY IN SPACE, with Gardner Fox continuing to script and Mike Sekowsky being replaced by Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson on the art. The feature did well there, expanding from nine to sixteen pages and sometimes taking over the whole book, and was unquestionably the overwhelming favorite among all the series that appeared in MIS or SA during the Schwartz years—or [with the possible exception of "Deadman,"] during anyone else's editorship.

The idea of a Terran becoming a hero on another planet, and even the unpredictable teleportation, dated back to the Mars novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs—but the difference lay in the way Fox treated his hero. Unlike Burrough's John Carter, whose prowess lay in his unparalleled swordsmanship, Adam Strange's superiority was almost entirely mental. Although physically fit, Adam wasn't a great athlete—he relied on his jetpack for transportation and his ray-gun for offense, both weapons available to Alanna and any other person on Rann. What made him unique was his imagination and ability to come up with the right idea at the right time—after which he, Alanna, and her father Sardath would get together and build whatever devices were needed to put his idea into effect. As several fans have remarked, Adam Strange was truly "the thinking man's hero"—which is why so many bright readers, whose intelligence exceeded their physical abilities, identified so strongly with him.

The science fiction titles I've discussed at such great length weren't the only titles Schwartz edited for DC in the 1950s. At various times, his office was responsible for westerns, crime comics, detective and spy stories, and even funny animals—all handled with the same attention to detail and novel ideas that characterized his SF titles. But when Schwartz began his super-hero revivals in the late 1950s, the influence from the SF titles seemed predominant.

The subject matter of a super-hero title, especially as handled by Schwartz, was closer to that of his science fiction stories than to, say, a Western. From Superman's origin onwards, scientific [or pseudo-scientific] explanations for super-powers had been extremely popular in super-hero stories, and the Schwartz titles used them almost exclusively. Even those like Green Lantern traced his power ring to the alien Guardians of the Universe rather than his predecessor's mysterious "magic" meteor, and Hawkman, although his name and costume were almost the same, became a Thanagarian police scientist rather than the reincarnation of an

Egyptian prince. The Atom changed from a Batman-type who had developed his own physical skills to the possessor of a scientific device that enabled him to reduce his size and weight; although both Atoms had stayed in college for many years, piling up graduate degrees before they were ever seen to teach any classes, the new one's scientific background and genius was much more apparent.

Even the villains were scientifically inclined. Some of them, to be sure, made their original discoveries by accident (like The Tattooed Man or The Mirror Master) or inherited them from others (like The Weather Wizard) but all were constantly improving their gimmicks, requiring the heroes to use their wits constantly in order to defeat them. The criminals The Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, and The Atom ran into were every bit as science-fictional as the alien invaders and exiled dictators Adam Strange encountered on Rann-and, indeed, it could well be arued that Julius Schwartz and FLASH/GREEN LANTERN writer John Broome invented the modern super-villain.

The heroes, fortunately, were just as qualified to fight these scientific menaces as were their counterparts in the SF titles. The Flash, The Atom, and Hawkman were all scientists of one sort or another. Even Green Lantern, who in recent years has sometimes been considered one of the less intelligent of DC heroes, was far from stupid. Although in later years he exhibited a certain naivete and immaturity unusual in a DC hero (though quite common in Marvel heroes) and continued to be an underachiever in the job market (taking a succession of jobs as a test pilot, insurance agent, travelling salesman and truck driver, none requiring a great deal of intelligence), he was also a well-read and knowledgeable man, whose scientific knowledge was as broad (if not **quite** as deep) as Adam Strange's. He more than once used his chemical knowledge to overcome the yellow weakness of his power ring--and, indeed, in one of the early Justice League stories ("Menace of the Weapons Master" in BRAVE & BOLD #29) he figured out an obscure geographic reference that even The Batman considered "kookie talk" at first.

In fact, Green Lantern saved The Justice League more than once in those early stories. At times, when he protected his memory from Amazo's power ring by inhaling and exhaling some chlorine gas at the appropriate time with no thought of poisoning, it was as much due to his total lack of fear as to his sharp mind. And yet, even as recently as TALES OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS #3, Hal Jordan has been proved to be one of the most indispensable and capable Green Lanterns in the universe--and in a Corps where everyone shares his honesty and fearlessness, intelligence can make a big difference!

After 1961, when ALL-STAR WESTERN was cancelled, all of the books from Julius Schwartz's office were science fiction of one sort or another. The policies originated on the SF books had adapted so well to the superheroes that the sales continued to increase. Ironically enough, it was that increase that resulted in the Batman titles, BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS, being reassigned to Schwartz--replacing the very SF titles in which that style had begun.

Curiously enough, although Batman had already been established as a very scientifically-inclined and brilliant man, whose knowledge rivalled even that of Adam Strange, Schwartz minimized the science-fiction influence in his stories. Probably this was due to the overemphasis on SF elements such as aliens, robots, and other dimensions under the previous Batman editor, Jack Schiff. A different direction was needed, and Schwartz proved he and his writers hadn't forgotten how to handle a straight detective story. Some traces of super-science remained, but for the most part the adventures of both Batman and his new co-feature, The Elongated Man, were mystery stories not too far removed from real life.

Other tendencies also began to surface in the Schwartz titles--as if their editor, now responsible solely for a super-hero line, was attempting to recapture the variety his comics had once had. John Broome had always shared Schwartz's scientific way of looking at the world--even his magicians, like Abra Kadabra in THE FLASH, usually turned out to be super-scientists in disguise. But Gardner Fox had a predilection for stories involving magic and the supernatural, which in the early 1960s rarely surface except from time to time in the JUSTICE LEAGUE series (Mort Weisinger had given Schwartz a sheet listing magic as one of Superman's weaknesses, a weakness that had developed and was primarily used by Weisinger's writers in stories involving Mr. Mxyzptlk. Fox came up with many other imaginative menaces to keep even the most powerful member of the JLA on the defensive.) Such stories gradually became more frequent in the other Fox-written titles as well, commencing with the introduction of Zatanna (daughter of Zatara, as Golden Age magician whose adventures Fox had written) and continuing with the revival of such old supernatural characters as Doctor Fate and The Spectre. The Spectre received his own book, which Schwartz's writers continued to handle in the best mystical tradition.

Indeed, the whole DC line was in transition in the middle and late 1960s: the executives were passing around Marvel comics, impressed by the success of this experimental line and trying to get their editors to duplicate it. Carmine Infantino was yanked away from his FLASH and BATMAN assignments and promoted to an executive position, where he in turn purged a number of other old-time writers and artists and replaced them with new people. Batman received his own television show, bringing more and more people to the comics but at the same time infecting them with a self-parodying "camp" approach that may have worked on TV but rarely did in the comic books.

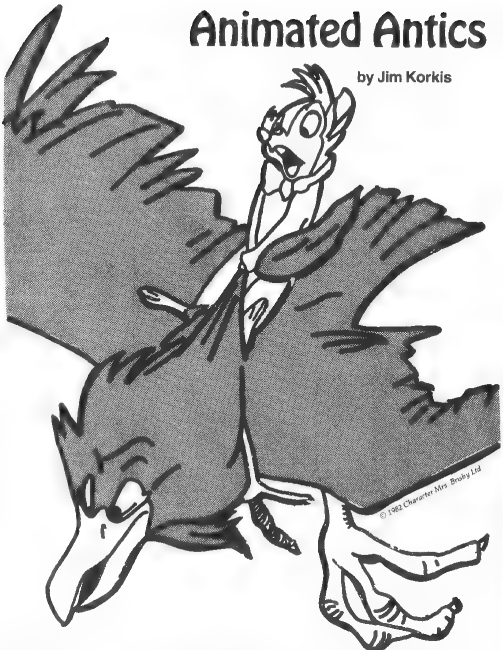
The face of DC in general, and of the Schwartz titles in particular, was changed irrevocably both for good and for ill by these and other influences. Schwartz went on to other successes--his award-winning GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW series between 1970 and 1972, and his revitalization of the Superman line at the same time (both with the aid of his best new writer, Dennis O'Neil) are deserving of special mention. But never again were any comic books to appear with as strong a science fiction influence as had been seen in the heyday of STRANGE ADVENTURES, MYSTERY IN SPACE, and the early Schwartz super-heroes of the Silver Age--and in many ways the field is all the poorer for their absence.

Animated Antics

by Jim Korkis

OF RATS AND MAGIC

Bambi and Secret of NIMH Reviewed



Bambi was written by an Austrian writer, Felix Salten, and the book became a best seller when the English version was published in 1929. It is a simple, sensitive story about the birth of a young deer named Bambi and his growth into becoming a Great Prince of the Forest. He is assisted in this growth process by Thumper the rabbit and Flower the skunk. (Neither of these characters appear in Salten's original story and were added at an early story conference with Walt.) After a while the three of them become "twitterpated", an interesting euphemism for falling in love, with their female counterparts and eventually Bambi must risk his life to save his mate.

It is a slight storyline that can barely support the length of the feature. No infamous Disney villain prowls through the plot to help focus an audience's empathy with the characters; the unseen "man" who disrupts the peace of the forest seems too nebulous a threat to create any

Two Disney feature length cartoons were released this summer but only one was produced by Disney Studios. **Bambi** and **The Secret of Nimh** share a technical artistry that spans forty years and demonstrates the magic of animation.

Despite the fact that this is only the fifth time in forty years that this film has been reissued, **Bambi** is a favorite animated feature for many fans. Like the popular **Snow White** and **Pinocchio**, it was part of the first wave of Disney animated features that are rightly revered as milestones in the history of animation. These films were made while Uncle Walt was still experimenting with the possibilities of the form and was still excited about the magic of animation. Later, for a variety of reasons, he lost interest in the animated features and the ones that followed this first wave comfortably fell into a formula that is still successful for the Disney Studio today.

true sense of alarm. Without a definite menace to overcome, the character of Bambi is so bland that the more theatrical Thumper seems to be the real star of the show. The story appears to be merely a loose collection of incidents because the characters don't seem to learn anything from their adventures. The famous ice-skating sequence with Bambi and Thumper is as delightful and well animated as any sequence ever to be done for an animated film but it has no connection with the rest of the story nor do the characters show any change after the experience. The bond of friendship is neither strengthened nor weakened; the scene does not foreshadow any further story point.

The whole film seems to be a scrapbook of outstanding animation with a handful of cute animals deemed sufficient to hold an audience's interest while dozens of men drew hundreds of pictures of a drop of water so that it would look like the real thing. In fact, this preoccupation with reality is the whole purpose of this film with the story of a young fawn being of only secondary concern.

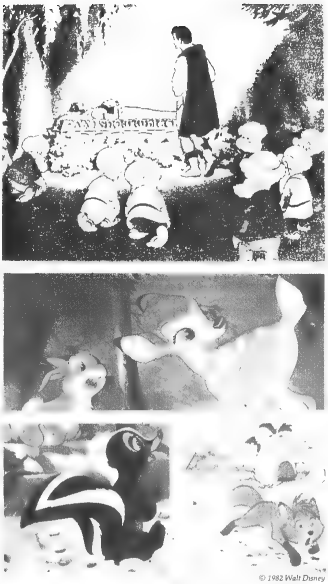
Disney strived hard to break the conventions of animation. He successfully introduced sound and color to the form and with **Snow White**, created characters that the audience accepted as real enough to cry. With **Bambi**, Disney wanted the animals, specifically **Bambi** himself, to move like real animals and not in the wrongly exaggerated fashion of their counterparts in the short cartoons; he wanted the forest to look like a real forest rather than a cartoon landscape.

This film was initiated in 1937, just before the release of **Snow White**. But despite its early start, Disney was to release three other feature length cartoons before **Bambi** was ready for release. Walt insisted on a realism and attention to detail that demanded so much time that other productions were released first. [**Dumbo** only took a year and a half from inception to final production.]

Bambi was a very special project for Walt and some sources claim it was his favorite animated feature. It was Walt himself who suggested the project after reading Salten's book and it was Walt who pared down the initial 10,000 words in the original script to the less than one thousand that appear in the finished film. A small zoo was assembled at the Disney Studio with animals imported from all over the United States and Canada to serve as live-action models. The Maine Development Commission sent two fawns who were housed in an expensive pen ouside the Animation Building where they were quickly joined by two skunks from Canada as well as an assortment of birds, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits and other creatures. [Interestingly, they didn't need to hunt for an owl; the Studio already had one nesting outside the Animation Building.]

Artist Maurice Day was sent on a five-month trip through the Maine woods where he covered more than 200 miles on foot while he photographed forests and wildlife for the animators back in California to study. Several members of the staff were sent on additional field trips in California, Oregon and Washington. To add to the feeling of realism, this film was the first feature to use oils instead of water based paints for the background.

This emphasis on realism has made **Bambi** an important film. It helped to show that animation was more than a child's amusement but an art form capable of handling even the most realistic of subjects. A stronger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story would have made this film the ultimate triumph rather than just another jewel in Uncle Walt's crown.

The Secret of Nimh is as much a Disney production as any that have been issued from that studio in the last decade and the film shares many of the same strengths and weaknesses that have been evident in those films.

This is the first major film to be produced by Don Bluth Productions. Bluth gained notoriety in 1979 when he and a group of Disney animators left Disney Studio after a well publicized complaint that Disney was forsaking classic animation techniques. [This complaint has some validity. At the time the animators left the studio, they were working on **Fox and Hound**. Not as well publicized was the fact that part of the cartoon was shot out of focus by a new cameraman who forgot to check his camera and Disney management decided not to reshoot the footage because it was too expensive. It is hard to imagine Uncle Walt in agreement with that kind of philosophy.] Bluth and his fellow animators put together a half hour cartoon, **Banjo the Woodpile Cat**, which was later sold to television and also did a short animated sequence for the film **Xanadu**. Both these cartoons were lauded for their Disneyesque ap-

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proach.

Bluth originally tried to interest Disney Studios in developing Robert O'Brien's book "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of **Nimh**", but Disney was not interested. When he started his own studio, Bluth obtained the rights to the book and went to work. He was forced to change the name of the heroine from Frisby to Brisby to avoid conflicts with Whammo's Frisbee. [If Bluth's studio is to survive, merchandising will play an important part in providing needed operating capital.]

The story of the film is more complicated than it first appears. Mrs. Brisby, widowed mouse mother of four, lives in a half buried cinder block in a farmer's fallow field. With the coming of the planting season they'll have to move, but complicating matters, one of her children has pneumonia and the move could prove fatal for him. She enlists the aid of the mysterious rats who have developed an underground civilization beneath the farmer's rosebush. The rats are from **NIMH** [National Institute of Mental Health] and were given experimental injections that gave them human-like intelligence. A power struggle within the rat community adds to the problems and Mrs. Brisby finally has to call upon her own inner resources to resolve the situation.

This synopsis omits two of the best characters in the story, Jeremy the crow and the Great Owl. Several reviewers have singled out these two for special mention and yet their presence does nothing to progress the story nor illuminate the events. An old mouse named Mr. Ages could have supplied the same information as the Great Owl and Jeremy's diverting slapstick could have been delivered by a more pivotal character. However, these characters bring a special spark to the story thanks to the outstanding vocal work of Dom DeLuise as Jeremy and John Carradine as the omnipotent owl. Their work stands out in a film that boasts superb voice work on all the characters. Rather than merely used for their publicity value, the voices were selected to truly give the characters distinct personalities.

This voice work is only outshone by the excellent graphics of the film. In some shots, there are ninety-six separate drawings in a single second of film. There were more than six hundred different colors used and this helps to create the special effects that abound in this feature. When water splashes, the audience not only sees the splashes but sees through them. Shifting shadows alter with a naturalness unseen in animated films since some of the early Disney features. Bluth also makes extensive use of the multiplane camera, a special camera originally developed for Disney by the late Ub Iwerks. A multiplane camera is a camera suspended eight to ten feet off of the floor and pointed downward. The background, character and special effects for each scene are placed on various levels, or planes, beneath the camera. The use of this method produces a sense of depth and the feeling of moving through the scene. It is an expensive and time consuming process, one which the Disney Studios has avoided in its recent animated efforts, although quite common in that fabled first wave of Disney features.

All of this technical wizardry produces eighty two minutes of beautiful animation. However, it cannot disguise weaknesses in the storyline and the continuity problems which have plagued every animated feature made within the last decade. Why is Justin the Rat so evil and why is he the only one? What is the source of that magical amulet given to Mrs. Brisby and why is this the only piece of magic in a story so devoted to providing logical explanations? Why does the owl know Mrs. Brisby's late husband and why doesn't the owl reappear in the story? Why is Jeremy's girlfriend so arbitrarily dropped into the story?

A host of similar questions will bother even the most casual audience and many will feel the film merely stopped rather than ended. Until companies learn to train storymen as well as animators, animation fans will have to content themselves with beautiful artistry and weak stories.

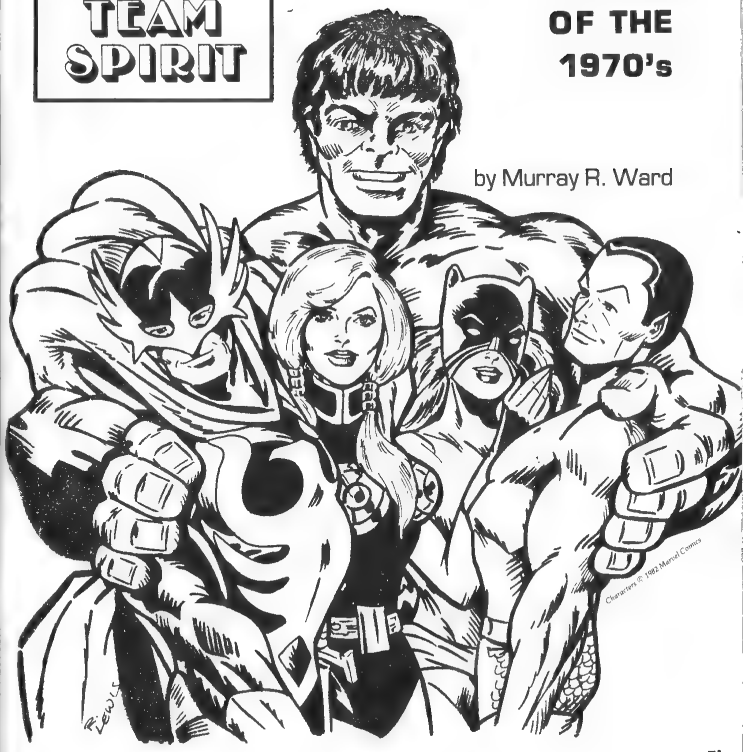
It was Bluth's intention to make a film more true to the original Disney spirit than those currently made at the Disney Studio and he certainly accomplished that goal. However, unlike the original Disney spirit, this film breaks no new ground. It does not explore the art form nor try to expand the state of the art. Perhaps now that the company has shown that it can physically do it like ol' Walt used to do, they will feel comfortable to use that skill to become more than good Disney imitators, to still pay homage to the past but to look to the future. Their next picture, based loosely on **East of the Sun, West of the Moon**, is a science fiction adventure with human characters that travel in space and to the underwater city of Atlantis.

Despite the span of forty years, **Bambi** and **The Secret of NIMH** are excellent examples of everything that is good about animation and unfortunately, many things that still limit the art from being more than just breathtakingly beautiful.

THE SUPER-TEAM SPIRIT

THE MARVEL TEAMS OF THE 1970's

by Murray R. Ward



In the decade of the 1970's, there were many more new super-teams published by Marvel Comics than in the 60's ... and yet, there weren't.

Confused? Believe me, you could only be more confused by having been there.

Once again, we must abandon our "Origins" and "Organization" format of the previous installments of this series, as few of the 70's Marvel teams have standard "origins" per se and many of them have little or no organization, to boot.

I. CONTINUATIONS AND COMEBACKS

First, of course, there were the super-teams who had survived from the 1960's into the 70's. At Marvel, these numbered two out of three: the Fantastic Four and the Avengers lived on, while the X-Men disappeared except for occasional guest-shots.

The Fantastic Four changed greatly in its second decade, although the basic original membership roster of Mr. Fantastic, the Thing, the Invisible Girl and the Human Torch was never to be split up permanently. Each of the foursome would leave the group for a period in the 70's and the team as a whole would be dissolved more than once, but despite the substitutions of Medusa for Sue Richards during her estrangement from husband Reed, of Luke (Power Man) Cage for the Thing when he temporarily lost his powers (and later, of Ben Grimm in an exo-skeleton costume for the "real" Thing), and of Thundra, Tigra and the Impossible Man for various members during a period of flux, the FF remained the FF of their first issue. No, the main source of change in Marvel's premiere super-team title was the creative staff. Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC and was replaced on the FF book by John Romita and then by John Buscema. Many other artists would handle the feature over the next few years, with its artistic stability being maintained mostly through the efforts of continuing inker Joe Sinnott. Rich Buckler, Keith Pollard and George Perez, among others would all get their chance to draw the quartet's adventures under Sinnott's able brush. About a year after Kirby's departure, Stan Lee also ceased to contribute to the book and Marvel's first 60's super-hero title was left without any of its original creative staff. Roy Thomas provided several imaginative sagas in two separate stints on the book with Gerry Conway, Len Wein and Marv Wolfman each scripting a brace of issues in the FF's second hundred. As the 1980's began, the **Moon Knight** team of Doug Moench and Bill Sienkiewicz produced a run of issues, immediately followed by John Byrne's current one-man-show aboard the Marvel flagship.

AT LO CHIN'S COMMAND, YOU DI!"
HOYYY-A!
TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT'S ALL ABOUT, CHECK OUT DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #'S 1, 3 & 4 -- ROY.
© 1982 Marvel Comics

The Avengers, ever in a state of change, lost long-time scripter Roy Thomas to the FF and to his new editor-in-chief duties in the 70's and underwent quests both cosmic and psychological courtesy of his replacement, Steve Englehart. With Englehart's abrupt leave-taking, Gerry Conway, Jim Shooter and David Michelinie each came to bat as Avengers writer (with the usual fill-in issues by other writers). As always, the roster of Avengers artists reads like a list of the Comics Hall of Fame during the 70's, as it had during the 60's. Unlike the FF, though, the Avengers changed their lineup repeatedly, even evolving long epic plotlines around the mere decision to add new members and drop old ones.

The sexual bias of the team became more balanced as a profusion of female members entered the ranks: Black Widow, Mantis, Moondragon, Hellcat, Ms. Marvel and Jocasta all first appeared in varying degrees of legitimate member-status during this decade. One member, the Swordsman, continuing the Avengers tradition of accepting reformed villains (Hawkeye, Quicksilver, the Scarlet Witch and the Ultron-controlled Vision were all on the shady side of the law before joining the Assemblers), heroically died in action, becoming the first Avenger (and one of the first member of **any** superteam) to perish. Mantis ascended to seeming goddesshood, while Moondragon claimed same. The Black Widow served the shortest-ever stint (one issue), while Daredevil, her then-partner, declined membership altogether. The Beast came over from the X-Men and provided comedy relief in his new furrier form and Wonder Man staged a seemingly impossible (even for comics) return from the grave. Former Marvel teen humor character Patsy Walker became a super-heroine as Hellcat, successor to the Cat, who in turn became Tigra in a typically convoluted Marvel cross-plot; the deadly Ulton inadvertantly added to the group's hangers-on with the creation of his robot bride; and two members were recruited to fill a government quota, of all things.

In the mid-70's, however, the FF and the Avengers would lose their monopoly on Marvel group superdoing to the point where the Avengers were hard-pressed (in No. 137) to find any new recruits who weren't already members of some other team. Someone at Marvel came up with the idea of quarterly giant-sized all-new comics and awarded on to each of several super-team concepts, including a revised version of the dormant X-Men; a try-out for the Inhumans in their own series; a group of the past--the Invaders, set during World War II; a group of the future--the Guardians of the Galaxy; and a hodge-podge alliance of former members of other teams--the Champions. Then someone else came up with a different idea and the giant comics were abruptly shelved and replaced with normal-sized versions of the same titles, with the result that there were only two issues of **Giant-Size X-Men** (the second being a reprint), one of **Giant-Size Invaders**, and none of any of the others.

The X-Men were to be the most successful of the many teams. Various creative personnel at Marvel had toyed with the idea of reviving them for years after their first series was cancelled in 1970, but it was Len Wein (immediately passing the scripting reins to Chris Claremont) and Dave Cockrum who turned the trick in the one-and-only all-original giant. The X-Men were back, but they were not the X-Men of yore. Mentor Professor X, team leader Cyclops and the "front" of a "School for Gifted Youngsters" which housed a band of young mutants-in-training remained, but the series took on an international flavor with the induction of new recruits who immediately staged a rescue of the original team. Nightcrawler, the teleporting acrobat of demonic appearance, was a German-born gypsy; Storm, who could control climate, was worshipped as a goddess in Africa; Colossus, he of the indestructible steel body, was a Russian peasant; Wolverine, whose animal senses and self-healing ability were enhanced by a skeleton and claws of adamantium alloy, had been a Canadian secret agent; Thunderbird, destined to perish on the new team's second mission, was an American Indian possessed of uncanny speed and strength. Two old friends from the first **X-Men** series also dropped by: the Irish-born Banshee and his sonic scream to stay and the Japanese Sunfire and his atomic firebolts only for a single caper. Gaining artist John Byrne as a replacement for Cockrum along the way, the so-called New X-Men would change their lineup but slightly over the next few years, with Banshee departing upon the loss of his powers, Jean Grey (once Marvel Girl) becoming the all-powerful Phoenix and ultimately perishing in a highly controversial multi-issue story and 13-year-old Kitty Pryde joining as the "phasing"-powered Sprite, as the series became one of, if not **the** most popular in modern comics. Currently, the X-Men has reached the point of spawning a spin-off, the New Mutant which like **Giant-Size X-Men** No. 1 before it, will introduce an entirely new team of mutant heroes and heroines, in an oversized book.

The Inhumans, on the other hand, were a revival of a slightly different flavor. They retained their former lineup upon gaining a magazine to call their own but, unlike the X-Men, they had never possessed their own title before. Introduced as supporting characters in one of the most memorable series in **Fantastic Four**, and brought back in several sequels, including a revelation of their origins in the back pages of **Thor** (replacing "Tales of Asgard"), they were not a team of super-heroes in the strictest sense, but a family of super-powered beings who owed their powers to genetic alterations in a bygone age by the alien Kree. "The Inhumans" refers both to the race as a whole and to the half-dozen members of their royal family. The group had its own strip for ten issues in the

DEAL WITH THEM--
LIKE, SO!!
I TOLD YOU PUNKS TO....URRGH!
HEY, BROTHER, THAT'S A GOOD MOVE!
THINK SO?
MY MOM USES IT ALL THE TIME AGAINST THE LOCAL JUNKIES.
© 1982 Marvel Comics

early 70's in **Amazing Adventures** but it suffered from a constantly changing creative staff. One found it hard to relate to a Jack-Kirby-scripted-and-drawn series, a Roy Thomas-Neal Adams collaboration and a Gerry Conway-Mike Sekowsky tandem effort as being about the same characters. With their new title, the Inhumans were put through their paces by Doug [**Master of Kung Fu**] Moench and George (at the time drawing three other Marvel teams--the FF, Avengers and Sons of the Tiger) Perez. As before, the main characters were Black Bolt, king and born leader doomed to remain forever silent for fear of unleashing the incredible power of his voice; Medusa, his lady-love of the living hair who had served as a sub for the FF after having made her debut as a misguided member of the evil Frightful Four; Gorgon, whose hoof-like feet could cause earth tremors; Karnak, known as the Shatterer for his unerring mastery of karate; and Triton, the aquatic green-scaled Inhuman who was also a long-time friend and ally of the Sub-mariner. Playing lesser roles in the strip were Medusa's younger sister, Crystal, former girlfriend of the FF's Human Torch who could control the four elements and her new husband, Quicksilver, the super-speedster mutant formerly of the Avengers. Also on hand to serve as transportation and comedy relief was the group's monstrous, antennaed, teleporting dog, Lockjaw. For a variety of reasons, none of them too clear even now, the Inhumans again failed to gain and hold an audience and were again devoted to guest-star roles after 12 issues.

The Invaders have already been discussed in an earlier segment of this feature, as their activities were based in the 1940's, although their adventures were not chronicled till three decades later. Basically, the team was formed of the three most popular Marvel (then Timely) characters of the Golden Age, Captain America, the original Human Torch and Sub-mariner, together with kid sidekicks Bucky and Toro and a rotating group of others, and their continuing mission was to halt the Axis powers and bring the Second World War to as swift and unbloody a conclusion as super-humanly possible. Inspired as they were by the two appearances in the late 40's of an "All-Winners Squad" composed of mostly the same heroes, the Invaders could also be considered a revival of an earlier team concept and as such, they outlasted the Inhumans but in no way competed with the X-Men, their series being brought to an early close with issue No. 41.

If the Invaders' roots in two issues of **All-Winners Comics** were less than memorable, those of the Guardians of the Galaxy, who had only previously appeared in a single story in **Marvel Super-Heroes**, a short-lived Marvel "Showcase" experimental title of the late 60's (it had started out as **Fantasy Masterpieces** and eventually became the Hulk's reprint title), were downright invisible. Still, somebody remembered the future-dwelling freedom fighters fondly after their Arnold Drake/Gene Colan debut, and their story was brought "up to date", so to speak, with lengthy guest-appearances in **Marvel Two-In-One** and **The Defenders**, both scripted by Steve Gerber. Ever a devotee of bizarre concepts, Gerber tied in the alternate future of the Guardians with those of Killraven in **Amazing Adventures'** "War of the Worlds" series and Deathlok, the near-future cyborg warrior of **Astonishing Tales**, and revamped another science-fiction character named Starhawk (who had been scheduled to appear a few issues after the Guardians in MSH but was caught in the transition of that title to a reprint book and never made his debut till Gerber's reworking) to add to the team. While the other teams originally scheduled for giant comics got their own regular-sized titles im-

mediately, the Guardians started their new strip in the **third** issue of the awkwardly-titled **Marvel Presents**, supplanting the immortal monster-hunter Bloodstone who starred in the first two issues. Having accomplished their original group mission of reoccupying the future Earth invaded by the lizard-like Brotherhood of Badoon [aliens whose most famous appearance had been in **Silver Surfer** No. 2) during their guest-shots, the Guardians left Earth behind to explore the mysteries of space in their own series, in which they also gained a female member, the youthful Nikki of Earth's Mercury colony. The original Guardians of the Galaxy had been Major Vance Astro, 20th-century astronaut newly awakened from a suspended animation voyage [surely the model for the Micronauts' Commander Rann); Charlie-27, the massive final survivor of the Jovian colony; Martinex, the last Pluvian survivor, notable for his science expertise, crystalline body-structure and ability to emit heat and cold blasts from his hands; and Yondu, alien archer[with sonically-controlled arrows) of Alpha Centauri IV. Despite weird and wondrous stories the equal of Gerber's outre offerings on **Man-Thing, Howard The Duck,** or **Defenders**, the Guardians and their oddly-named comic were destined for limbo after issue No. 12, after which the team would pop up in **Avengers** on a time-travel mission.

II. NEW TEAMS, OLD HEROES

[with one exception]

Before moving on to the final of Marvel's mid-70's should-have-been-a-giant-comic teams, the Champions, we must backtrack to discuss the **first** new Marvel team of the 70's, whose creation preceded the various "comebacks" already noted. This article began with the premise that while there were many more new Marvel super-teams in the 70's, at the same time there weren't: this was partly because many of the new teams, as seen so far, really weren't new at all, but simply were getting their own books after a long wait; also, it was partly because the other new teams were [save one) all "formulated" teams ... new teams, to be sure, but made up entirely of pre-existing super-characters.

The first of these started in **Marvel Feature** No. 1 and ran for three issues therein before graduating to its own book, a gestation process much like that of DC's Justice League. The team was the Defenders and as the name suggests, they seemed at first glance to be an obvious attempt to duplicate the success of the similarly-tagged Avengers. But the original Defenders were, if anything, an even more unlikely assemblage of allies than their Avenger brethren had been in their first outing. The Hulk, a poor prospect as a team member at best, was again on the roster, and instead of a thunder god, a millionaire industrialist and a biochemist-turned-size-changer, his new compatriots were his old sparring partner, the Sub-Mariner and the mystical Dr. Strange. It was as if Roy Thomas had decided to make a team of all the old co-stars of **Strange Tales** and **Tales To Astonish** [with the exception of Nick Fury).

Actually, the Defenders had their beginning in an ending of sorts. In the final issue of his first solo series [No. 183], Dr. Strange had investigated the death of archaeologist Kenneth Ward [love that name!) and begun a running battle with the demonic Undying Ones and their leader, the Nameless One. With his title cancelled, the good doctor was forced to continue the struggle in a guest-appearance in **Sub-Mariner**, teaming up with the Sea Prince in the process and to conclude it, together with his magical career, in an issue of **The Incredible Hulk**. End result: Dr. Strange had teamed up with Sub-mariner and with the Hulk to good effect and had retired as Master of the Mystic Arts. Meanwhile, back in the Sub-mariner's comic, Namor found himself briefly involved in an alliance with the Hulk and the Silver Surfer, under the fighting name "Titans Three". Needless to say, the trio was able to accomplish its goals fairly

easily, even when it came to standing off the three most powerful Avengers: Thor, Goliath and Iron Man. Therefore, when Dr. Strange was forced out of retirement in a back-up strip in that self-same first issue of **Marvel Feature** and abruptly found himself faced with a threat too big to handle alone, he naturally thought of enlisting his recent allies, Subby and Hulk. (The Surfer, an early Defenders recruit, would have been in that first story, too, but could not be located in time.) Although the unlikely threesome was victorious, they split up at the end, regarding their team-up as a one-shot occurrence. After all, they were all too busy and too disinclined to participate in a regular Avengers-like team: Doc had his mystic meditations to tend to; Subby had his kingdom to run; and the Hulk gruffly opined that he "was on team once. Called Avengers. Didn't like it."

However, as fate and Roy Thomas would have it, things didn't end there. Circumstances kept cropping up that required the combined powers of Doc, Namor and the Hulk to set them to rights. Finally, the Defenders agreed to get together whenever the occasion demanded it: there would be no formal team, no "memberships" or headquarters, but if they were needed and they weren't too busy, they would rally to the call. This "non-team" situation persisted as the three and the Surfer again encounted the Nameless One, and found themselves with an unwanted gung-ho new "member": the Valkyrie, who wanted to join the Defenders, despite the male heroes' insistence that there was really no team to join. Hawkeye, on a hiatus from the Avengers, found himself allied with the un-team in the classic Avengers-Defenders Clash, a war between the two super-groups and Loki and Dormammu that crossed back and forth between the two group titles during the summer of '73. With the resignation of the Sub-mariner and the admission of Nighthawk, a reformed villain who wanted to turn the Defenders into a "regular" super-team even more than did Valkyrie--to the extent of setting them up in a formal headquarters, the Defenders had all but lost their battle for uniqueness as comics' "only-when-needed" super-group.

From that point, Defenders membership was variously defined as including anybody who happened to

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guest-star in **Defenders**, or any Marvel hero who didn't belong to another team, or **every** Marvel hero whether he belonged to another team or not. Over the years, the original members, plus Valkyrie, Nighthawk, Hellcat (the most lasting of the seemingly endless stream of Avengers expatriates who have turned up in **Defenders** since their inception), and a few others have been regulars or semi-regulars, providing the feature with some semblance of continuity in the face of every-issue guest-stars, momentary "members", and one complete debacle for all concerned (issues Nos. 62-64) in which almost every Marvel hero at loose ends did indeed try to become a Defender. As can be seen by the roster at the conclusion of this segment (which is open to argument as to which members are properly in the "core", "guest" and "try-out" categories), virtually every Marvel character has had **some** dealings with the Defenders over the past decade. Curiously enough, the Hulk, expected by everyone to quit at the first opportunity, has been one of the most regular members until recently, finding in "Stupid Magician, Sword-Girl, Bird-Nose and Cat-Girl" (as he calls Doc, Valkyrie, Nighthawk and Hellcat) the much-needed close friends he had lacked for most of his gamma-ray-transformed existence. Most recently, Dr. Strange, often absent to deal with goings-on in his own book, has returned as a regular and with other mystically-oriented regulars such as the Son of Satan, the Devil-Slayer and the Gargoyle, has gained the Defenders a reputation as the super-team that specializes in battling threats from the supernatural.

Returning to the middle-70's and our plethora of "new/old" super-groups, we find the last of these and the second Avengers-type "formulated" team of the 70's: the Champions. Whereas the Defenders owed their origin as a team, or non-team, to the chance meeting of several unrelated characters, none of whom had ever (save for Hulk's brief Avengership) been on a super-team before, the Champions was by-and-large a group made up of former members of other super-teams. An unwieldy concept at best, but thought workable after similarly strange teamings had proven successful as the Avengers and Defenders, the Champions were formed after two former X-Men, the Angel and Iceman (who left the mutant group when the aforementioned international membership was instituted), two ex-Avengers, Hercules and the Black Widow (the former fresh from a guest-stint in **Thor**, the latter having just broken off her relationship with Daredevil in his comic), and one lone-wolf hero, the Ghost Rider, found themselves simultaneously battling aspects of the same menace on the campus of U.C.L.A. This led the Angel, who had just come into a sizeable inheritance, to propose the setting-up of a new super-team on the West Coast, not so much to deal with rampant super-villeins as to help "the common man".

Surviving such obstacles as having their origin story broken up over three regular-sized issues after the "giant-size quarterly" concept of the book was thrown out, and going on for issues and issues with the team still not formally organized (the Black Widow was finally appointed leader by default after several disorganized adventures--no one else had the gumption to boss a demi-god and demon biker; the headquarters building and skycraft took forever to get built, and then didn't work right), the Champions nevertheless shared some exciting cases, including a match-up with the fledgling Soviet Super-Soldiers which gained them the lovely Darkstar as a second distaff member, a guest-appearance by their resident scientist and sometime-member Black Goliath and a tie-in with his solo book even as it folded, and guest-shots in **Avengers** and an **Iron Man Annual**. The handwriting was on the wall, though, and even

several issues with art by John Byrne couldn't save the Champs.

Inasmuch as their book was cancelled after 17 issues, it is comparatively easy to find out. What happened to [the Champions during their career] them afterward is worth looking into for a moment, however. The Ghost Rider had been becoming more and more demonic and less and less like a skull-headed Johnny Blaze [as seen in his own book over the past few years] and eventually would have turned against his teammates, even if the team hadn't broken up in disgust at their inability to get organized. GR cycled back into his own book and there he has remained since the Champions' demise. Hercules and Black Widow, both of whom are known for their romantic flings with other Marvel characters, left together to explore what seemed to be a budding relationship, only to have it end overnight with a careless remark by Herc [in an **Avengers** story] and Natasha's decision to try to patch things up with Daredevil [which didn't work out either, as it happened]. Iceman had never been in love with the idea of the Champions, but he **had** been on the verge of replacing his unrequited love-affair with Lorna (Polaris) Dane of the X-Men with a romance with Darkstar, when the latter heroine resolved to return to the Soviet Union. With Darkstar gone and everybody else leaving, Iceman followed suit and then there was one: the Angel. In **Spectacular Spider-Man** No. 17, of all places, we learned how Angel stuck around long enough to dispose of the rapidly-disintegrating Champions Building [unscrupulous contractors had foisted faulty materials on the neophyte mutant-super-hero-turned-business-man], before going into semi-retirement from super-heroing. Becoming involved with the X-Men again during the Dark Phoenix affair, he stayed with them for a time, replacing the absent Cyclops, until a disagreement with Wolverine drove him back into semi-retirement. Today, Ghost Rider appears in his own title, Hercules in his mini-series, Black Widow once again in **Daredevil,** Iceman is likely to pop up anywhere [he's currently pursuing a college education] and Angel was last seen guest-starring in **Dazzler.**

For a brief moment in comics history, the Champions held a unique niche as the only super-hero team ever to break up for good and stay broken up. And the heroes who made up that team **did** stay broken up ... but the name "the Champions" was too good to give up. After some unexplained legal negotiations with Warren (Angel) Worthington, who had presumably copyrighted the name, the young hero Nova and his space-faring companions, engaged in an epic plotline in the final few issues of Nova's comic and the concurrent issues of **Fantastic Four**, abruptly dubbed themselves "the New Champions". Had NOVA persisted beyond its 25th issue [with its humorous cover-logo reading "He's Gone! The Human Rocket!" rather than the usual "He's Here! The Human Rocket!"], the magazine might have been retitled **Nova And The New Champions**. The roll call included the Comet, a 1950's super-hero summoned out of retirement; the Crime-Buster, a modern-day gimmick-hero who turned out to be the Comet's long-lost son; Powerhouse, an amnesiac alien and former foe of Nova's who turned good when he regained his memory; and Diamondhead, an out-and-out villain who allied himself with the others merely to preserve his own hide and to look for a chance to betray them. Also travelling with the group were the Sphinx, Nova's ancient arch-enemy and Dr. Sun, late the villain of the **Tomb of Dracula** series. With a roster like that, one can only speculate what **might** have happened to the New Champions had they not suddenly disappeared when **Nova** was cancelled and Marv Wolfman left the writing of **Fantastic Four**. As is, the team recently returned in an issue of **ROM**, in which Crime-Buster was killed, Nova depowered and sent back to Earth and Diamondhead pulled the expected Judas trick. With only Comet and Powerhouse left, the New Champions can probably be considered to be disbanded, at least for the time being.

There was, as mentioned, one exception to the rule of all 70's teams being formulated from already existing heroes. This team was not composed of super-heroes at all, but since super-human mastery of the martial arts must now be counted as a "super-power" [at least as practiced by Sheng-chi, Iron Fist, Richard Dragon and Batman] and since their existence did lead to the creation of a bonafide super-hero, we are bound to include the Sons of the Tiger in our listing of 70's teams.

The Tiger Sons began as an obvious attempt to emulate the highly successful kung fu movie, "Enter the Dragon", and at the same time to create a back-up strip for Sheng-chi, Marvel's Master of Kung Fu, to run in the new black-and-white magazine, **The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu.** Like the three heroes portrayed by Bruce Lee, John Saxon and Jim Kelly in

YEAH, IT WAS THOSE NICE, NEIGHBORLY INHUMANS!
HOW'S ABOUT A SECOND ROUND, EH, WEIRDOS?
DO I HEAR A VOLUNTEER FOR THE OPENING CLOBBERS?
WE WITHDRAW FROM FURTHER HOSTILITIES,
BLACK BOLT HAS RECEIVED TIMELY WORD!
WE HAVE ORDERS TO CEASE FIGHTING!
© 1982 Marvel Comics

"Enter", the protagonists were a group of young martial artists, one Oriental, one white and one black. The strip staggered along weighted down by a convoluted plotline involving the customary cult of mysterious evildoers until Bill Mantlo became its writer and George Perez became its artist. As Mantlo put it in an interview, he and Perez both "hated kung fu", so they began changing the strip to phase out the martial arts aspect and eventually even the title characters and make it over into something they could enjoy doing. After Lin Sun, Bob Diamond and Abe Brown rescued Chinese damsel-in-distress and martial-arts mistress Lotus Shinchuko from their cult enemies, she joined their team and began a romance with the white member, movie actor Bob Diamond. Following complaints from some readers about Lotus's preference for playboy Bob over fellow Oriental Lin, Mantlo and Perez broke up the original twosome and then used the resultant fight between Diamond and Lin Sun over Lotus's affections to dissolve the team. The Sons of the Tiger had a gimmick beyond mere kung fu, though: each member wore an amulet, in the form of two tiger claws and a tiger's head which, when the three stood together and recited a chant, gave each the combined martial skills of all three. After the rather ugly break-up, Lin departed with Lotus, Bob went on location to make a new movie and Abe became involved in a solo adventure. All three chucked their amulets in the trash. Here they were found by one teenage Hispanic, Hector Ayala, who donned them and instantly found himself transformed, without so much as a Shazam, into a martial-arts superhero, the White Tiger!

Over the remaining issues of **Deadly Hands**, the strip would center on the White Tiger, culminating in his team-up with Shang-chi, Iron Fist and another new Mantlo-Perez creation, the Jack of Hearts, while briefly touching bases with the three former Tiger Sons. In the last installment before **Dhokf** was cancelled (appearing in the penultimate issue, as the last issue featured a Shang-chi story and the conclusion of the two-part "Daughters of the Dragon" strip begun in the previous issue), Lin, Lotus and Bob were reunited and reconciled and together with the White Tiger, prepared to go in search of the missing Abe, whom we readers were aware had become a seemingly murderous opposite number to Hector Ayala called the Black Tiger. When the White Tiger next appeared, however (in **Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man**, which mag seems to specialize in tying up loose ends), it was revealed that he had declined to accompany the others on their quest. The Black Tiger plotline and the fate of the Tiger Sons (who had also, by the way, met Spider-Man and the Human Torch in an issue of **Marvel Team-Up**) was thus left unresolved for some years until Bob Diamond, replete with facial shrubbery, turned up as Danny (Iron Fist) Rand's new sparring partner, and the results of the quest for Abe Brown were finally revealed in a recent issue of **Power Man And Iron Fist**, courtesy of Mary Jo Duffy. Today, Hector Ayala has given up his White Tiger identity after his duel role was accidentally revealed and his family subsequently murdered by the underworld. The amulets are thus back in the possession of Lin, Abe and Bob, so the possibility is quite real that the Sons of the Tiger may appear as a team once more, most probably in **Power Man And Iron Fist**, one of whose supporting characters, Colleen Wing (also one of the aforementioned Daughters of the Dragon), is Bob Diamond's current love interest.

III. MEMBERSHIP

THE DEFENDERS

Founded: MARVEL FEATURE #1

Core members:

1. DR. STRANGE
   (Stephen Strange)
2. THE SUB-MARINER
   (Prince Namore I, Namor McKenzie)
3. THE HULK
   (Dr. Robert Bruce Banner)
   see also AVENGERS
4. THE SILVER SURFER
   (Norrin Radd)
   Joins: DEFENDERS #2
5. THE VALKYRIE
   (Barbara Denton Norriss; Brunnhilde of Asgard)
   Joins: DEFENDERS #4
6. NIGHTHAWK
   (Kyle Richmond)
   Joins: DEFENDERS #14
7. THE SON OF SATAN
   (Daimon Hellstrom)
   Joins: GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS #2

8. POWER MAN
   (Luke Cage)
   Joins: DEFENDERS #17
   see also FANTASTIC FOUR
9. DAREDEVIL
   (Matthew Michael Murdock)
   Joins: GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS #3
10. THE RED GUARDIAN (II)
    (Dr. Tanya Belinsky)
    Joins: DEFENDERS #36
11. CLEA
    Joins: DEFENDERS #39
12. HELLCAT
    (Patsy Walker)
    Joins: DEFENDERS #44
    see also AVENGERS
13. DEVIL-SLAYER
    (Eric Simon Payne)
    Joins: DEFENDERS #58
14. THE GARGOYLE
    (Isaac Christians)
    Joins: DEFENDERS #94
15. THE BEAST
    (Henry P. McCoy)
    Joins: DEFENDERS #104
    see also X-MEN, AVENGERS

"Guest-star" members:

1. HAWKEYE
   (Clint Barton)
   — first in #7
   see also AVENGERS
2. BLACK KNIGHT
   (Dane Whitman)
   — first in #11
   see also AVENGERS

3. PROFESSOR X
(Charles Xavier)
— first in #15
see also X-MEN
4. THING
(Benjamin J. Grimm)
— first in #20
see also FANTASTIC FOUR
5. YELLOWJACKET
(Henry J. Pym)
— first in GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS #4
see also AVENGERS
6. MOON KNIGHT
(Marc Spector)
— first in #47
7. MS. MARVEL
(Carol Danvers)
— first in #57
see also AVENGERS
8. SPIDER-MAN
(Peter Parker)
— first in #61

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9. WASP
(Janet Van Dyne Pym)
— first in #76
see also AVENGERS, LADY LIBERATORS
10. MOONDRAGON
(Heather Douglas)
— first in #76
see also AVENGERS
11. BLACK PANTHER
(T'challe, son of T'Chaka; Luke Charles)
— first in #84
see also AVENGERS
12. WONDER MAN
(Simon Williams)
— first in #104
see also AVENGERS
13. MR. FANTASTIC
(Reed Richards)
— first in #105

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see also FANTASTIC FOUR
14. CAPTAIN AMERICA
(Steve Rogers)
— first in #106
see also AVENGERS, INVADERS
15. VISION
— first in #112
see also AVENGERS, INVADERS, ALL-WINNERS SQUAD — latter two as Human Torch
16. SCARLET WITCH
(Wanda Frank)
— first in #112
see also AVENGERS, LADY LIBERATORS, BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS

"Try-out" members in DEFENDERS #62-64:

1. JACK OF HEARTS
(Jack Hart)
2. POLARIS
(Lorna Dane)
see also X-MEN
3. BLACK GOLIATH
(William Barrett Foster; becomes Giant-Man II)
see also CHAMPIONS
4. STINGRAY
(Walter Newell)
5. IRON FIST
(Daniel Rand)
6. CAPTAIN MARVEL
(Mar-Vell of the Kree; uses alias "Walter Lawson")
Dies: MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL #1
7. HERCULES
(uses alias "Mr. Powers")
see also AVENGERS, CHAMPIONS

§. MARVEL MAN
(Wendell Vaughn; becomes Quasar)

9. NOVA
(Richard Rider)
see also NEW CHAMPIONS
10. FALCON
(Sam Wilson
see also AVENGERS
11. PROWLER
(Hobie Brown)
12. TORPEDO
(Brock Jones)
13. PALADIN
(real name unknown)
14. CAPTAIN ULTRA
(real name unknown)
15. WHITE TIGER
(Hector Ayala)
see also SONS OF THE TIGER
16. HAVOK
(Alex Summers)
see also X-MEN
17. TAGAK
(his real name)

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THE INHUMANS

Founded: FANTASTIC FOUR #45-46
THOR #146-151

1. BLACK BOLT
2. MEDUSA
(also called Madame Medusa; introduced in FANTASTIC FOUR #36)
see also FANTASTIC FOUR, LADY LIBERATORS
3. GORGON
(introduced in FANTASTIC FOUR #44)
4. KARNAK
5. TRITON
6. CRYSTAL
see also FANTASTIC FOUR
7. QUICKSILVER
(Pietro Frank)
see also AVENGERS, BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS
8. LOCKJAW
(their pet)

THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

Founded: MARVEL SUPER-heroes #18

1. MAJOR VANCE ASTRO
   [born Vance Astrovik]
2. CHARLIE-27
   [of Jupiter colony]
3. MARTINEX
   [of Pluto colony]
4. YONDU
   [of Alpha Centauri IV]
5. STARHAWK
   [Stakar/Aleta]
   Joins: DEFENDERS #27-28
6. NIKKI
   [of Mercury colony]
   Joins: MARVEL PRESENTS #4

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THE CHAMPIONS

Founded: CHAMPIONS #1
Disbanded: PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #17

1. THE ANGEL
   [Warren Worthington III]
   see also X-MEN
2. ICEMAN
   [Bobby Drake]
   see also X-MEN
3. THE BLACK WIDOW
   [Natasha Alianovna Romanoff]
   see also AVENGERS, LADY LIBERATORS
4. HERCULES
   [uses alias "Mr. Powers"]
   see also AVENGERS, DEFENDERS
5. THE GHOST RIDER
   [Johnny Blaze]
6. DARKSTAR
   [Laynia Petrovna]
   Joins: CHAMPIONS #10
   see also SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS
7. BLACK GOLIATH
   [William Barrett Foster; becomes Giant-Man II]
   Becomes "guest-star" member only: CHAMPIONS #11
   see also DEFENDERS

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THE NEW CHAMPIONS

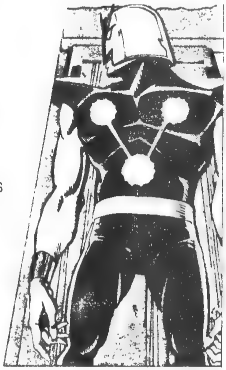
Founded: NOVA #24
Disbanded: ROM #24

1. NOVA
   [Richard Rider]
   Quits: ROM #24
   see also DEFENDERS
2. THE COMET
3. CRIME-BUSTER
   Dies: ROM #24
4. POWERHOUSE
5. DIAMONDHEAD
   [Arch Dyker]

THE SONS OF THE TIGER

Founded: DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #1
Disbanded: DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #19

1. LIN SUN
2. ABE BROWN
   [becomes Black Tiger]
3. BOB DIAMOND
4. LOTUS SHINCHUKO
   Joins: DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #10
5. THE WHITE TIGER
   [Hector Ayala]
   Inherits team's powers: DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #19



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STRIP TEASE

Rick Norwood

—FORM—

Anyone who knows advertising will tell you how important layout is. No newspaper editor can afford to be ignorant of what advertising people consider important. This takes the form of a sylogism: newspaper editors must know that layout is important. So why do they screw around with comic strips? Because they do not like comic strips. Why do they run comic strips? Because the readers demand them. Aren't the readers important? Ask your editor.

For an inside glimpse at how newspaper editors feel about comic strips, I recommend the Milton Caniff interview in SPIRIT #35. "Many editors **hate** the comics." That says it all.

Milton Caniff draws the Sunday Steve Canyon in a format called "one-third of a page", or a third page for short. It looks good. His assistants then butcher this page, physically cut it up, chop the bottom third from each panel, lopping off legs and chests and chins. They then rearrange it to form a half page and a quarter page. If they look awful (and they do) then it is the fault of the newspaper editors for running an awful looking strip when a great looking strip is available.

For many years this cut and paste was done to the original artwork. This may or may not still be the case. I wish I knew. But the thought of all of that beautiful Caniff art coming under the scissors makes me feel sick. All to the end of taking something beautiful and making it look ugly, so that newspaper editors will like it better.

Other strips suffer a worse fate, with parts of the story cut away as well as parts of the art.

How did it all begin?

Comic strips were not originally designed for kids. They were to amuse and captivate newspaper readers, who were almost exclusively adults. Comic strips were a hot item. They were big, colorful, and very, very popular. They changed the language: "Great Balls of Fire", "Good grief!". An artist could become rich.

Panels from Steve Canyon | Top, 1/3 page as he drew them, bottom, cropped to fit 1/2 page.

Then came comic books.

Comic books were, at first, inferior reprints of comic strips — later inferior imitations of comic strips. They were, with few exceptions, written and drawn so badly that nobody but a kid would read them. If you doubt me, go take a look at a comic from this so called "Golden Age". (For another view see the NMP titled, **The Golden Age of Comics.**)

If there is anything a big, grown-up newspaper editor hates to be called, it is "childish". Everything is childish except money, power, and sex. Comic books are especially childish, and comic strips are guilty by association.

Then came World War II and a paper shortage. It was a perfect excuse to cut back on the comic strips. Strips which used to fill a big, beautiful newspaper page were chopped up into a variety of formats, all designed to cram as many strips into as small a space as possible and never mind how they look.

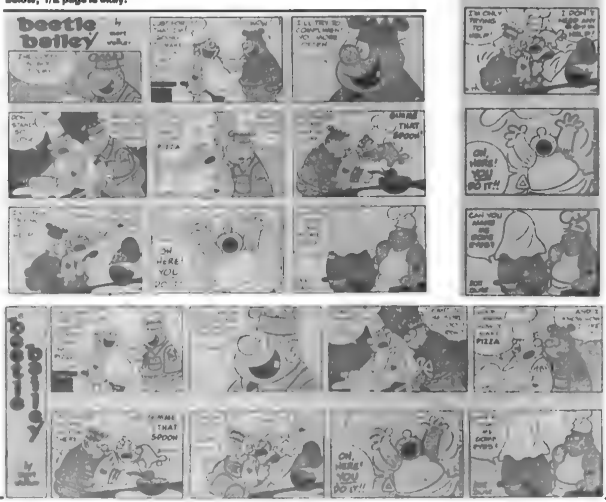
In one generation comic strips changed from a medium worthy of the personal attention of William Randolph Hearst to something to be farmed out to the most junior editor — who hated the job.

Comic books, incidently, got better as comic strips got worse. But not that much better. Comic books are still [with a few noteworthy exceptions] turned out on an assembly line. Comic strips, the best ones, are the personal creation of an artist/writer.

Most comic strips today are chopped up into four or five formats, which puts an almost killing burden on both the artist and the collector. Russ Manning used to say that he would try to design the Terzan strip to look good in both the tabloid and the half page format, and to hell with the third page. Russ Manning half pages are some of the best written and best drawn of all time.

What is all this "half page", "tab

Beetle Bailey - Right, odd size last 3 panels; bottom, 1/4 page last first panel; below, 1/2 page is okay.


beetle bailey
by mort walker
OH HERE! YOU DO IT!!
I'M ONLY TRYING TO HELP!
I DON'T NEED ANY HELP!
CAN YOU MAKE AN OMELET?
AND I KNOW HOW TO MAKE PIZZA
PUT SOME MORE CHEESE THERE
GIMME THAT SPOON
OH HERE! YOU DO IT!!

page", "third page" business?

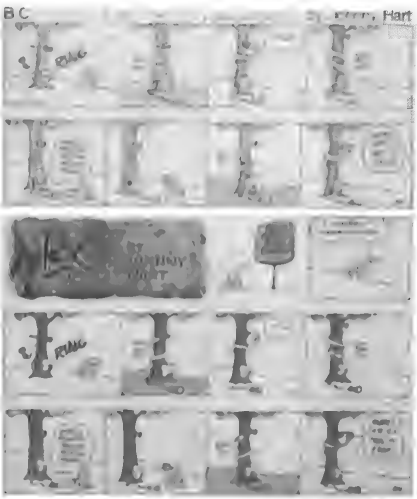
Newspapers come in two sizes, full size and tabloid. A full page is roughly 14" X 22" — used to be 15" X 22". A tabloid is the size of a full page folded in half, or roughly 11" X 14".

Tabloid papers are popular in cities that have subways. Full page size is used everywhere else.

"Full" always means a full size newspaper page. A full tabloid page is called a "tab." "Half," "third" and "quarter" are the formats that fit two, three, or four strips on a full page. For a tall page, you see "half tab" or "third tab".

The early strips were all full. The artist had a full newspaper page to play with. Some artists liked to divide their pages into two strips, a small "topper" strip and a large main strip. The strips were distributed by syndicates to newspapers all over the country. Some newspaper would buy individual strips, some would buy a package, like the Hearst "Puck Comic Weekly", which varies only slightly from city to city. Unlike comic book artists, who are paid a flat page rate, a comic strip artist makes more money if his strip is carried in more papers, a powerful incentive. Nobody ever got rich drawing comic books. Charles Schulz is reportedly paid the highest salary in the nation.

B.C. - Top, 1/3 page tab (cut title and first panel, middle, 1/2 page is okay, bottom, 1/4 page is okay.

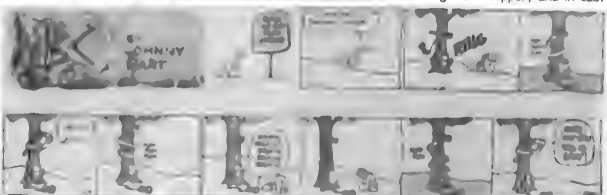


The first problem with formats arose in the 1930's, when tabloid papers became popular. But it was not a major problem. Tabloids and full pages had roughly the same proportions, so a full page could be reduced in size to fit a tabloid page, with perhaps a little art added at the bottom of the panels.

Then, in 1935, the Puck section changed from full page to tabloid. The experiment only lasted a few months, but it was the first major dislocation of comic strip format.

Puck carried many of the most popular strips, Blondie, Bringing Up Father, and especially Flash Gordon. At that time Flash Gordon was a full page with a Jungle Jim topper. For a few weeks after the change to tab standard, Jungle Jim vanished, and Flash took the whole tab page. Then Jungle Jim came back with a tab of his own. Newspapers around the country who wanted full size Flash Gordon just blew the tab up to full size. These pages are very rare, and much sought after by collectors.

But the full size newspapers wanted Jungle Jim, too. So, after a few months, the syndicate, King Features, began to offer Flash Gordon in both the old format, with a Jungle Jim topper, and in tab. This



meant that Alex Raymond artwork had to be greatly modified to change one format to the other. And, instead of being free to design the page in an interesting way, the artist was locked into a format that would be easy to modify.

The last tabloid Puck carried a Flash Gordon which has become famous: the flight of the hawkman army. This is a huge panel, in which the army sweeps across the entire page. I have seen this page in three formats (at Bill Blackbeard's San Francisco Academy of Comic Art): a full page with a Jungle Jim topper, a full page with just Flash Gordon, and a tab page. To go from one to the other the Hawkman panel was not only cropped, but tilted.

This was Alex Raymond's last display of memorable layout. The artwork remained fine, but after this panel we see the same layout page after page, year after year.

Puck went back to the full page standard, but every artist had to prepare a tab page as well, usually with cropped or expanded panels. Chicago Tribune artists took the tab page for their standard. Little Orphan Annie and Dick Tracy abandoned the full page, and new strips like Terry and the Pirates were tabloid from the beginning. If a full size newspaper wanted to run these strips, they were rearranged from four lines of three panels each to three lines of four panels each, and the half page was born. But the artists were thus locked into a twelve panel format. Then, some tabloids, to cram more strips in, reduced the half page in size to make the half tab.

When Prince Valiant began, in 1937, syndicate editors, with the kind of astute judgement we get today from television network executives, decided that the strips would flop, and only offered it in tab format. For the first fifteen pages, Prince Valiant appeared only in four tabloid newspapers. The strips was hugely popular, the big papers demanded it, and from #16 it was offered full page. These early full pages are very rare. Prince Valiant continued full page until the very last Hal Foster page, #1788, which was **not** offered in full page size!

During and after World War II, using the paper shortage and then rising costs as an excuse, strips got smaller and smaller. The theory was that thirty bad strips had to be better than ten good ones. The next major format was the third page — that's short for "one third of a full page". To accomodate this increasingly popular format, the full page was dropped (except for Prince Valiant, and a handful of others) and the half page was changed from a rearranged tab to three lines with the top line expendable. From this time on, for most strips, the half page is the best form to collect.

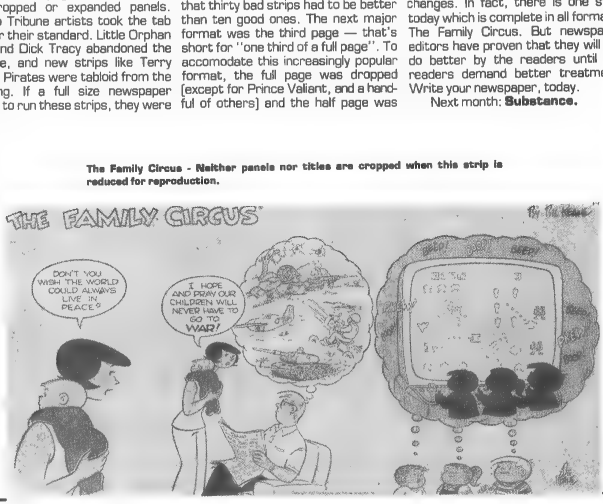
This new format put a constraint on the script as well as the art. Nothing could happen in the top line of the strip, or the readers who got only the third page would lose track of the story. It was as if the syndicates and the newspapers, both of whom were making large fortunes off of comic strips, were determined to do the strips in.

The final indignity (so far) is the quarter page, which has become popular in the last ten years, This is a Sunday format as small as the daily strips of the 1930's. The artwork is reduced, format is actively unpleasant, text is hard to read. Many collectors will not collect quarter pages at all.

There is no earthly reason why comic strips cannot be printed the way they are drawn, with, perhaps a movable title to allow for size changes. In fact, there is one strip today which is complete in all formats: The Family Circus. But newspaper editors have proven that they will not do better by the readers until the readers demand better treatment. Write your newspaper, today.

Next month: **Substance.**

The Family Circus - Neither panels nor titles are cropped when this strip is reduced for reproduction.


THE FAMILY CIRCUS
DON'T YOU WISH THE WORLD COULD ALWAYS LIVE IN PEACE?
I HOPE AND PRAY OUR CHILDREN WILL NEVER HAVE TO GO TO WAR!

The Thinking Man's Hero.

The works of Gardner Fox.

by Gene Phillips

Gardner Fox had a magical imagination. By itself perhaps this would not be an extraordinary talent, except that comics generally see so little imaginative writing—in the main, the writer relies on the artist to make cliche work seem "new." If I may indulge in the conceit of discussing "types" of imagination, one sees the most developed kind in very few, such as Doug Moench and Don McGregor—that kind being the poetic imagination, the rare ability to discover images that reflect emotional states, ethical ambiguities, and cultural attitudes. Most of the better formula-writers, like Archie Goodwin and Steve Englehart, develop technical imagination—that is, they develop just enough insight into a chosen image or source of imagery (*MANHUNTER*'s martial arts, *DR. STRANGE*'s Western esotericism) to use such to heighten their stories' effects, but not necessarily to make a philosophic statement or even to display their aesthetic preferences. Somewhere in between is the magical imagination—which constructs stories along the same formulaic lines as the "technical" type, but shows a deeper, almost poetic preoccupation with diverse imagery. The process is analogous to the way a magician may meditate on an image which symbolizes one aspect of a larger reality, in order to produce a desired effect—though the writer's only desired effect is the sense of wonder, and the "larger reality" can be science as easily as sorcery. The superhero-sf genres in comics generally limit imagery to forces, weaponry, and similar paraphernalia, and the format limits a writer's descriptive options—but some craftsmen, even if lacking in artistic goals, choose to exert themselves a bit more, when they could get away with less. Examples:

GREEN LANTERN#37: In most encounters between cosmic-powered combatants, the clash consists of tedious power-bolts and finger-rays—but under Fox, Evil Star attacks GL with such bizarre phenomena as giant, ear-torturing bells, an animated DNA

molecule, and "titanic geometrical designs of raw matter."

In terms of the exotic menaces faced by these heroes, no writer or writer/artist, with the qualified exceptions of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in each category, has ever exceeded Gardner Fox's staggering output. Each of them epitomized some bizarre aspect of nature or science—Chac, Chronos, Kanjar Ro, Felix Faust, Ziathrion, Grodd, The Manhawks, Jason Woodrue, Mirror Master, The Contras, Queen Zazzala, Dr. Polaris, Dr. Light, and others too numerous to mention. Considering that Fox wrote full scripts, one assumes that very little of this creativity was derived from his artists, and only a small amount from previous writers like Broome (whose Star Sapphire was not nearly as dynamic as Fox's rendition of her.) Inevitably, one sees that Fox did not characterize most of his villains, saving his few attempts at characterization for the heroes and their supporting cast. Nevertheless, his ability to interrelate different systems of knowledge—scientific, occult, or even the mundane facts of the detective—was no less ingenious than Lee's penchant for characterizations. (And each strength, in times of lesser inspiration, showed its typical weakness: pedantry for Fox; soap-opera bathos for Lee.) Again, in true mythic fashion, Fox perpetuated the tradition of the hero who conquers his enemies not only with physical combat, but also with special knowledge of their attributes (as Hercules defeats Antaeus by strangling him in mid-air, or Green Lantern foils the Aerialist via static electricity.) Lee and Co. often faked the approach with convenient super-gadgets, bypassing the knowledge-oriented procedure in favor of emotional impact. However, Fox's approach had its limitaitons as well—for though he was better than most DC writers at establishing a solid mythic foundation for each character, the stories always remained episodic, and lacked the unifying continuity-oriented vision seen at Marvel. Most of Fox's alien races are more convincing as aliens than either the Skrulls (Marvel's inhuman aliens) or the Kree (Marvel's superior humanoids), but sheer recurrence gave the latter two the appearance of mythic importance.

HAWKMAN #20: Instead of the usual asphalt jungle or otherworldly settings, Fox exploits the appeal of such natural exotic settings as an Aegean isle, where a mysterious living flame staves off earthquake, and the Zagros Mountains in Irtan, where the bestial Lion-Man menaces a tribe of Mithra-worshippers.

SHOWCASE #64: Perhaps the best

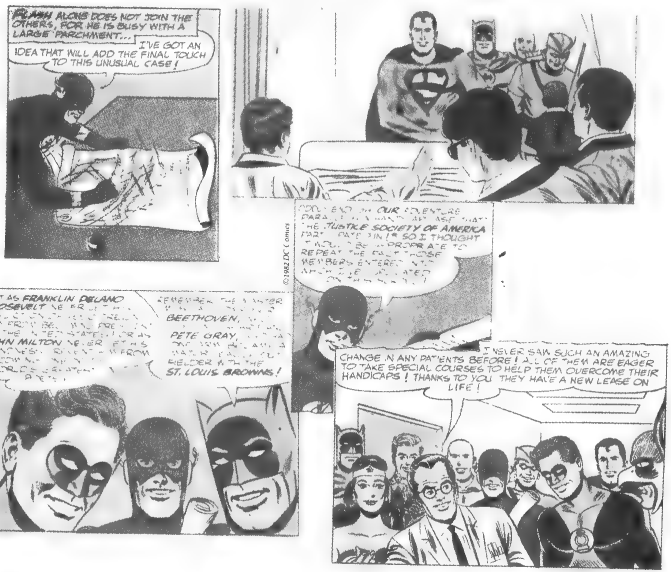
reason to term Fox's imagination "magical" is his fascination with nearly all forms of traditional magic, which the Golden Age first witnessed in his creation Doctor Fate, the first magician-hero to display any occult authenticity. In *"The Ghost of Ace Chance,"* the Spectre's adversary conjures for the basilisks from "Gold Alley—that mystic street of the Alchemists in prague," witches and warlocks whose magic creates a searing "fire-flopwer," and the "dread chapel of Secaire," where evil cultists wield such weapons as "unholy sistram and ritual lunar sword...Paracelsus' trident and the Ring of Gyges."

(This fascination with magic makes an interesting contrast with Fox's contemporary John Broome, whose stories followed some of the same formula-patterns, but emphasized pure science. Both of them utilized numerous references to abstruse scientific facts, but Broome pursued the ratiocinative, problem-solving branch of science-fiction, while Fox used facts to excite wonder and a sense of the infinite, thereby aligning himself more with fantasy and its bastard-child, science-fantasy. Thus, for all the problem-solving of the Adam Strange strip, the aliens who continually attack Rann assault its denizens with all manner of illogical weaponry—liquifying them, "vacuumizing" them, crystallizing them.)

If there is one key word that describes Fox's type of creativity, then it would be the same as the one often used to describe the chief virtue of the pulp era—extravagance. Fox learned his craft at a time when the dimensions of science-fantasy—that is, of supernatural fantasy given scientific rationale—had taken certain definite, formulaic shapes, and the writers most often printed were those who learned to embellish their fantasies with great verve and color. I once stated that Fox followed "the Williamsonian formula of wonder," by which I did not mean that Jack Williamson invented the subgenre, but simply that he was a more likely model for Fox's story-structure than such earlier science-fantasists as E. R. Burroughs and A. Merritt. In any event, the fantasy-oriented branch of SF concentrated upon evoking the wonder in the exotic worlds in which their characters adventured, whereas, in ratiocinactive SF, wonder was focused upon the creative propensities of man's mind. Whereas the latter led to an anthropomorphic philosophy of the universe, the former engendered a semi-poetic attitude not unlike pagan adoration of both nature and the supernatural. Thus, Fox's choice of formulaic modes was an excellent one, inasmuch as his "pagan" sense of wonder corresponded perfectly with the adventures of mythologically-inspired superheroes.

Naturally, Fox's work had other areas of appeal besides the prodigal use of imagery, but those other aspects are less outstanding. He had no great knack for the witty repartee of the Stan Lee-Arnold Drake variety, but there is a sly humor in some of his situations, such as the Justice League "sitting out" the battle between the Shaggy Man and the Moon creature. Occasionally he would attempt more profound themes, such as the need for human brotherhood in the excellent "Deadly Creatures of Nightmare Island"—but at times his conventional outlook damaged his credibility (in "Man, Thy Name is Brother" the black character proves his goodness by trying to stop armed thugs from ripping off white owned property.) As opposed to the Marvel formula, which centered all emotional concerns on the hero and supporting cast, Fox's heroes often concerned themselves with helping individual outsiders like orphans and the handicapped (other DC writers followed this pattern, but usually indulged in cloying sentimentality in such situations.) Last but not etc., Fox had a refreshingly openminded attitude toward the roles assumed by his female characters—his heroes' girlfriends pursued such professions as attorney and aircraft-company president, and his villainesses seldom showed any weak-kneed tendency to reform.

All this, of course, does not even mention Fox's significance as one of the key founders of the Golden Age, and one of its more literate exponents, even judging solely the scripts of that period. In view of his longevity and his usually-consistent level of quality, one could assert that he was National's finest writer, especially in view of how he made that company's episodically-oriented, plot-heavy editorial policy work for him, rather than being forced to sacrifice all wit and originality to the repetitively-grinding mill of the four-color medium. Some have duplicated his profligacy of colorful concepts (Jim Shooter), though not for such an extended period. Some have pursued abstruse knowledge with equal diligence (Steve Gerber, John Warner). But Fox's contributions remain fundamentally unique, since they are charged with (rather than burdened by) his own eccentricities, verve, and skill. (Even Gerber could not reproduce, in glorious gusto, the 18th-century jargon he wrote with such glorious gusto—and he alone, could write similar to the pernicious pirates and bombastic buccaneers.) perhaps, Fox was at heart an artist who pretended to abscond with his meager wages in exchange for formulaic, apparently-superficial stories—but in reality, left behind (for those tuned to appreciate it) a magically-endowed buried treasure.


I'LL SAW ALONE DOES NOT JOHN THE OTHERS, FOR HE IS BUSY WITH A LARGE PARCHMENT...
I'VE GOT AN IDEA THAT WILL ADD THE FINAL TOUCH TO THIS UNUSUAL CASE!
THE "LITTLE SOCIETY OF AMERICA" HAS ONE SIN IN SO I THOUGHT
JUST AS FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT
BEETHOVEN,
PETE GRAY,
JOHN MILTON
ST. LOUIS BROWNS!
CHANGE N ANY PATIENTS BEFORE! ALL OF THEM ARE EAGER TO TAKE SPECIAL COURSES TO HELP THEM OVERCOME THEIR HANDICAPS! THANKS TO YOU THEY HAVE A NEW LEASE ON LIFE!

THE GREAT ORIGINALS

BY Gene Phillips

{PRELUDE: Before launching this armada of articles, it may help to state the philosophical predilection underlying the studies. Briefly, this article-series subscribes to a calculated belief in the process, most identified with psychologist C. G. Jung, of racial memory—which states that certain mythopoeic symbols, or archetypes, reoccur throughout the dreams and dream-works of mankind by dint of both repetition and universal appeal.

Beneath the superhero's gaudy gladiatorial garb, beneath the adolescent appeal of his (or her) continual brawlings, one may rarely glimpse a core of genuine mythopoeic meaning—at least in the basic concept, if not in the execution. Indeed, for better or worse, superheroes are the only genre at which comic books have excelled, which other media have rarely adapted to equal effect. All mythic figures arouse similar archetypal responses (in which even a bastard form like the superhero can participate). The mythos-structures that guide these heroes through their various adventures and encounters are of a radically different kind—patterns in which the development of the hero follows either the way of Christ or of Osiris, of Moses or of Merlin, of the Buddha or of Shiva.

Obviously, between all of these couplings there are numerous similarities and differences, but the principal difference—the one which most visibly affects the structure—is that the former myth-figures typify what are called "emissary" religions, while the latter belong to the type called "pagan." The former emphasize a truth embodied in one luminous figure, or in a host of figures descending from one ancestor or philospher. The latter emphasize several interacting "numinosities" which embody, not abstract truths, but powers of nature—wind, water, sex, death—and the poetic milieu that is created by their interaction. The usual terms offered to contrast these differing modes are "monotheistic" and "polytheistic"—but in dealing with comics, whose myth-figures are gods only in terms of unconscious symbolism, a wider pair of designations, "monomythic" and "polymythic", may serve better. These are the patterns which, on the average, have unconsciously guided the story-structures of Superman and Batman from their inception, and continue to do so today.

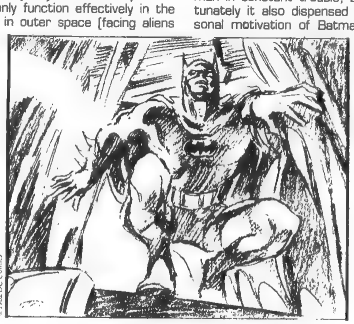
I. Origins

It's scarcely original to observe that the beginnings of both heroes involve their parents in a Liebenstod, or love-death—that is, faced with an external threat, they immediately perish, leaving the child with an obsessive death-trauma. Yet while Batman's parents are killed by the human phenomenon of crime, Superman's are obliterated along with most of his culture by a cosmic catastrophe. Therefore, in adulthood Batman largely fights crime with human skills and weapons, while Superman largely prevents catastrophies with a multitude of godlike powers. Following only these guidelines, one might expect Batman to be a monomythic figure like the Shadow, whose opponents were generally mundane stereotypes, and Superman to be the penultimate polymythic hero, whose foes would have the "apocalyptic" status that Philip Jose Farmer assigns to Doc Savage's colorful villains. But ironically, the mythic structures were reversed by a collection of odd circumstances.

First, the story-patterns of Superman and Batman were based on certain seminal influences. For Superman, only one major subgenre—the early SF "sense of wonder" tale—provided the basic pattern of human beings being forced to deal with fantastic powers. Philip Wylie's **Gladiator**, emphasizing the element of Herculean strength loosed upon normal society, is clearly the strongest influence (though of course both are indirect spawn of Nietzsche's "Ubermensch," though the American version, rather than being beyond good and evil, is basically an "ordinary guy" of high morality. The use of **Gladiator** as Superman's model tied the Man of Tomorrow closely to the real world, and while Superman's role as city-protector resembles some polymythic heroes (Gilgamesh, Hercules), both the city and the perils that threaten it lack mythic resonance. The dangers: common hoods, natural disasters, forgettable aliens—none of these could assume much importance, for Superman's stories, with very few exceptions, were wholly focused upon the phenomenon of Superman's

powers.

Batman's mythos, however, took inspiration from a number of interrelated genres: pulp-adventure, mystery/detective stories, the crime-melodrama, and an occasional cite of supernatural horror. While Superman protected Metropolis, a vaguely-defined center of commerce and daytime activity, Batman protected Gotham, a city of dreadful night where human menace could become exaggerated and extraordinary. Modeled on a variety of genres, the Batman could move fluidly through many adventure-milieus, and if he lacked the purely physical power of a Hercules, the mythos' emphasis on his skill and ingenuity gave the stories a more Odysseyan flavor. Superman could only function effectively in the city or in outer space (facing aliens whose motivations were one-dimensional and unimaginative); Batman, however, could be at home in the city, the jungle, the desert, on the Orient Express, or in the Rocky Mountains. Though a majority of adventures took place in his "sacred city," after the fashion of his predecessors (the Shadow, Zorro, Sherlock Holmes), Batman's mythos was also more generally affected by the pulpish concept of the soldier-of-fortune, the lone adventurer who was at home in any clime, a la Conan (sort of an "extroverted" heroism, as opposed to "introverted"). Thus Batman could have his heroics both ways, because his world was rooted in an exaggerated version of reality—but Superman could only repeat his city-protecting role over and over, for his creators would have had to draw heavily on their imaginations to create mythopoeic settings to challenge their hero's implicitly-cosmic aspects. A second consideration, though not as powerful as the seminal influences, was the private lives of the heroes. Superman's technologically-advanced culture was destroyed, leaving him an orphan shaped by Earth-culture—first as a tough-talking muscleman modeled on Clark Gable ("One side, SISSIES" he snarls), and later, as a representation of America's idealized bucolic heritage; an eternally-conscientious Boy Scout. His chosen profession as journalist may have been merely a device to keep Superman in constant trouble, but unfortunately it also dispensed with personal motivation of Batman's sort,



and more importantly, it served to banal-ize the awesomeness of a Superman feat by turning it into journalistic fodder. Batman, however, was not catapulted out of millionaire status by his parents' deaths; rather, it enabled him to move with equal facility between posh settings and squalid environments; the epitome of "the noble mingling with the masses", after Robin Hood and Haroun Al-Raschid. Superman never acquired the common touch that could make him privy to human passions (whenever he tried, his preponderance of powers made him seem an awful busybody), and rarely did his occupation ever thrust him into danger in as subtle a manner as could Bruce Wayne's (for instance, Bruce Wayne's sponsoring an art show might lead to a bizarre murder, etc.).

II. Images

Edith Hamilton once opined that the Greek ideal of the human form marked an advancement from the crude, animal-headed (or masked) deities of the Egyptian pantheon. Superficial though such an evaluation may be, one must agree that the emphasis upon the anthropomorphic (man-form) often indicates an independence from nature, while the theriomorphic (beast-form) stresses the continuity of man with the forms and forces of nature. Though early stories often featured Superman as a mundane crimefighter or a war-stopper, ultimately his single most mythic act is the quelling of a natural catastrophe, of making sure the furies of nature do not interrupt the nine-to-five Metropolis routine. But Batman, whether lurking in the expressionistic shadows of Gotham or in some more exotic clime, always meets the environment on its own terms. Should nature threaten him, he does not overwhelm it as Superman would, but adapts to it by use of special knowledge or the "enchanted" devices in his belt (it should be noted that occasionally Superman has lost his powers and been forced to fall back upon primitive skills of wilderness survival, so dear to early American mythology.

As for specific images, Superman, muscular and strong-jawed, dressed in bright-colored cape and tights, is a perfect anthropomorphic specimen, a pragmatic savior-figure who preserves the orderly workings of human endeavor in a thoroughly secular manner, concerned only with solving immediate problems and getting results—i.e., with demonstrating the supremacy of progressive rationalism. Now, not all anthropomorphic heroes share the monomythic emphasis (Captain Marvel is one who does not), but theriomorphic types are perhaps more prone to develop an abundance of polymythic associations, a sense that the natural world is replete with a multitude of diverse numinous presences. The traditional shaman tries to assume the powers of one of these by donning the guise of an animal—and this, perhaps, most separates the Batman from predecessors like Zorro and the Shadow—the image of the prehuman entity. A shaman, however, though able to use his rational intellect in certain situations, lives in an unpredictable world—where real vampires or werewolves may exist alongside phony witches or ghosts; where lightning may flash from the sky to execute a villain who mocks the powers of Death; where rival shamans constantly contend with the hero-shaman, drawing on wisdoms and powers opposed to his own. Even Robin, explicitly named after the Master of Sherwood's merry coven, has a faint resonance with the concept of the initiate, whereas Superman only has Jimmy Olsen, a "worshipper."

In conclusion, it might be remarked that, though Batman's chosen emblem does not have a great wealth of associations in archaic myth, the bat does bear iconographic similarity to such horned beasts as bull, stag, and goat, as well as a similarity to winged birds. The image of horns, then, gives this Oddyseus-like hero the supernatural aura of a Pan or Cernunnos (whom Batman "coincidentally" met in JLA #49, thanks to the mythic perspicacity of Gardner Fox.) Superman's only iconic element is the letter "S" that he bears (if anyone cares to relate this to the Greek **sigma** or the Hebrew **shin** they are welcome to try). With angelic "wings" to symbolize spirit, and horns to symbolize earthiness, Batman is the ideal pagan union of opposites, bearing much resemblance to the winged devils of Italy, and to Eliphas Levi's famous

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portrait of the winged "Goat of Mendes."

III. Love-Interests

Most series do not have the longevity of Superman or Batman, and so cannot be judged as monomythic or polymythic by the nature of their characters' love-interests. But Superman and Batman, by accident or dim design, have always remained representative of each myth-pattern's sexual orientations—i.e., monogamy or polygamy.

Superman, more like a medieval hero then a monomythic savior, remains eternally bethrothed to Lois Lane from his very beginnings, so that between them there is literally a marriage between a mythic son of the stars and a lady of the mundane earth (or, in this case, newsprint). If there was any relevant reason beyond convenience as to why Lois received this single honor, it might be that in the forties the profession of news reporter was one of the few "heroic" occupations that a woman might practice as easily as a man. Ironically though, Lois' independence was construed as little more than headstrong impulsiveness, so that unlike types like Brenda Starr and Torchy Blaine, Lois becomes more of a comic foil then a great romantic interest, and generations of revisionists have not really been able to undo this cheuvinistic image. (The Fleischer Superman-cartoons probably pegged Lois' psychological image best when

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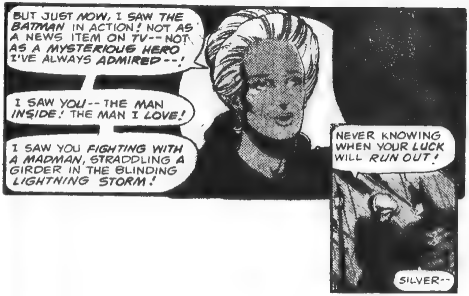
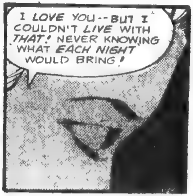
they pictured her as a female of willowy attractiveness, forever going about garbed' in severe male clothing.] The only aspect of independence that Lois was able to keep was the mythic act of the Delilah-like woman who betrays her lover's secret—a myth which, according to Robert Graves' **White Goddess**, was originally emblematic of her taking another lover—but in this, too, Lois' motive was nothing more than Pandora-like curiosity.

"But wait," cries the ardent Superman fan, "Did not Superman have numerous dalliances with ladies besides Lois?" Indeed he did—but these took place, for the most part, after almost 20 years of exclusively rescuing Lois, and even then, the Weisinger mythos usually imposed on the women the L. L., initials signifying Superman's devotion to the One Woman (and perhaps the One Villain—more on that later). All of Superman's paramours share an essentially passive attitude of willingness to put on an apron and devote their lives to raising super-brats, an attitude that clearly traces its way back to Super-Clark's belittling of Lois' independence. (In **The Comic-Stripped American**, Arthur Asa Berger contends that the early Superman displayed much of the American male sexual attitude of the times—not to simply have women sexually available, but to be in the position of refusing their attentions from a Gable-like, no-nonsense perspective.


BUT JUST NOW, I SAW THE BATMAN IN ACTION! NOT AS A NEWS ITEM ON TV--NOT AS A MYSTERIOUS HERO I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED--!
I SAW YOU--THE MAN INSIDE! THE MAN I LOVE!
I SAW YOU FIGHTING WITH A MADMAN, STRADDLING A GIRDER IN THE BLINDING LIGHTNING STORM!
NEVER KNOWING WHEN YOUR LUCK WILL RUN OUT!
SILVER--



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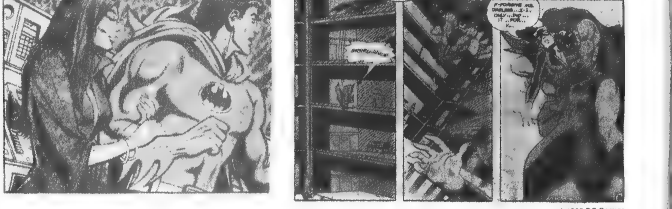
SO YOU PLAYED ME FOR A SUCKER, WELL, YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT 2 WHEN I TELL SUPERMAN ABOUT YOUR CROOKED SCHEME...
YOU'RE NOT TELLING ANY-ONE ANYTHING ! I'LL FIX THAT RIGHT NOW !
NTLY, AS SUPERGIRL WATCHES EAGERLY FROM EARTH, NER TELESCOPIC VISION...
UND NER! AN ADULT FEGIRL -- A WOMAN ! THEY'RE KISSING! CASE OF LOVE AT FIRST ! I'M SO HAPPY FOR ! HMM... DUE TO THEIR R-SCIENTIFIC DEVICES, RYLIANS PROBABLY EARTH LANGUAGES !
© 1982 DC Comics

Batman has no fixed star in his romantic firmament, and often he is in the role of the medieval Devil, repeatedly attracting the affections of "sinful" [read: independent] women. His separations from his potential life-loves are far more poignant than Superman's due to this indeterminacy as to his romantic destiny. Certainly his paramours, unlike Superman's harem, are notably independent--Catwoman, Queen Bee, Talia, Poison Ivy, the ghost of Gothos Mansion, Silver St. Cloud, Batwoman--and even actress Julie Madison, who briefly became a vampiress [**Detective** #31] and later became a queen. Thus Superman embodies a strict patriarchal myth, allowing for no important female villains, while Batman's feature is almost Hindu-like in its willingness to venerate the feminine archetype. One can only condemn those writers who have tried to reduce Batman to a single paramour, especially Paul Levitz, who started the whole idiotic "Earth-II Batman" business that caused other literal-minded writers to exalt the Catwoman as the One True Love and the Bad-Girl-Turned-Good at once.

Yet, as an interesting addenda, it must be admitted that though current writers like Wein and Conway are dead wrong in trying to reform the Catwoman [she exists best as an amoral figure, not having the type of personality that generates heroism], they are correct in seeing her as Batman's most significant female, for reasons they could scarcely suspect. Unusually enough, though most myth-associations can be easily explained as being transmitted through the mass-media [the aforementioned Delilah image], the Batman/Catwoman linkage is one of the few myths in comics that seems a genuine archetypal resurgence--that is, the rebirth of an association of images that was not readily available to the transmitters of the images [in this case, Bob Kane and/or Catwoman's creators] through mass media. I refer to three obscure myth-traditions--Egyptian, Hittite, and Hindu--in which god and goddess were incarnated in animal-forms. The god became a bull [recall Batman's iconic similarity to taurian forms] whose horns symbolize generative power; the goddess, a feline, lioness or leopard, whose multiple "breasts" represent fecundity. These images of deific pairs--Ptah/Sekhmet, Teshub/Hebat, Shiva/Parvati--would have been even more obscure in the 1940's than they are now--and if that doesn't demonstrate archetypal transmission, I'll eat my Jung primer!



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End NOTES

Those among you who regularly follow my work in this magazine are well aware how I often become annoyed when critics for mainstream publications write uncomprehending, narrow-minded reviews of animated or live action fantasy films. As a result, although I was enthusiastically looking forward to the New York City premiere of *THE LOONEY, LOONEY, LOONEY BUGS BUNNY MOVIE* (hereafter to be called *LLL*) last November, I was so eager about reading its reviews in the newspapers. To an extent, my apprehensions were justified. The *NEW YORK TIMES* review implied that the film's director, Friz Freleng, was the sole director and even the creator of Bugs Bunny ("...Mr. Freleng is responsible not only for Bugs...") while the *DAILY NEWS* went one better (or worse) by declaring that Freleng had "dreamed up Krazy Kat"! But the *TIMES* went on to praise the film highly. Well, though I, for once a major New York paper has recognized the true worth of these classic cartoons. That review certainly made up for the one in the *NEWS*, which warned that although *LLL* begins quite enjoyably, "halfway through adults will start acting, well, buggy."

But the *NEWS* turned out to be right. By the time the films was two thirds over, I had developed a headache that not even the virtues of the last third could make disappear.

LLL is an eighty-minute feature consisting of twelve old Warner Brothers cartoons directed by Friz Freleng and twenty minutes of new animated footage directed by Freleng that serves as framing and transitional sequences. This is the second recent film of this sort from Warners; the first was 1979's *THE BUGS BUNNY-ROAD RUNNER MOVIE* (hereafter to be called *BB-RR*) which was made up of classic cartoons (and excerpts from others, in the case of the Roadrunner sequences) and new animated framing sequences, all directed by Chuck Jones. Whereas Jones's own company did *BB-RR* for Warners, *LLL* is the first major product of the new Warners animation studio, which was formed last year with Freleng as its head. As such, *LLL* must be regarded as a sign for the direction the new studio will take.

Both compilation films include only cartoons made from 1948 onward; hence LLL does not include great 1940s Freleng cartoons such as the energy-packed *LITTLE RED RIDING RABBIT*, *RHAPSODY IN RIVETS* (animals build a sky-scraper to the accompaniment of Liszt's Second Hungarian Rhapsody), *A HARE GROWS IN MANHATTEN* (Bugs' boyhood in a Gay Nineties Lower East Side), *SLICK HARE* (Elmer Fudd and Bugs do battle in a Hollywood restaurant filled with caricatured movie stars) or the early and hilarious duels between Bugs and Yosemite Sam (whom, Freleng and the late writer Michael Maltese created) in *BUCCANEER BUNNY* and *BUGS BUNNY RIDES AGAIN*. The Warners cartoons made before 1948 were sold to United Artists, under whose care the prints' colors are slowly but surely deteriorating. (When Warners sold the cartoons, the new owners destroyed the Technicolor negatives, so that now only inferior Eastmancolor prints are available. This provides an object lesson in the havoc that can be wreaked by those who believe in the It's Just Cartoons philosophy.)

Still, there are many very fine post-1947 Freleng cartoons, such as *BACK ALLEY OP-ROAR*, the superb Bugs-Sam sea battles of *CAPTAIN HAREBLOWER* and *MUTINY ON THE BUNNY*, the hysterically suspenseful airborne duel between the two called *HARE LIFT*, and the wonderfully entertaining Tweety and Sylvester cartoons *ALL ABIR-R-RD* and *BAD OL' PUTTY TAT*, to name a few. (It was

ONCE MORE, WITH FRELENG

by Peter Sanderson

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Freleng who teamed Tweety and Sylvester and established their personalities in the forms with which we are today familiar.) Unfortunately, neither these nor other worthy selections turn up in *LLL*, which for the most part devotes itself to lesser efforts.

The fact that *LLL* uses mostly cartoons from the 1950s leads to another problem. Freleng appears to have been particularly influenced by the rebellion of the UPA studio against what its people regarded as the "literalism" of Disney animated films. Rather than attempt to create a realistic look, UPA animation artists gave their characters and settings simpler, more stylized, and "cartoonier" designs. Although Bugs and company look the same in 1950s Freleng cartoons as before, the designs of the backgrounds and of the subsidiary characters in many of the film reflect UPA's innovations. However, the stylizations are not always that interesting in these Freleng cartoons, the comparatively realistically drawn lead characters sometimes look misplaced amid these surroundings, and, most importantly, the simple but bland designs do not look good on a big screen after twenty years of similar work on inferior television cartoons. By now it is the relative literalism of the 1940s Warners cartoons (to say nothing of the Disney films) which looks unusual and highly impressive. Also, the thick black outlines around main characters in Freleng's 1950s cartoons seem crude and distracting.

LLL gets off to a very bad start: after only a one sentence introduction by Bugs Bunny, the film immediately launches into the short *KNIGHT KNIGHT BUGS*, set in medieval times, in which Bugs battles the Black Knight (Yosemite Sam). It is difficult to see why this cartoon won an Academy Award in 1958, since it is really only an average Bugs-Sam short, with some mildly interesting gags. At its close Bugs informs us that Freleng directed and won an Oscar for it, and Bugs will tell us of Freleng and his achievements three more times before the movie concludes. Since Freleng produced, directed, and co-scripted the movie, these tributes seem rather immodest. (*BB-RR*, on the other hand, has Bugs list several of his directors and writers, as well as Mel Blane, who provides his voice, as his "fathers," and then simply state that the film is devoted to Jones's work; Bugs does not refer to him again.)

BB-RR had Bugs wander about his portrait-filled mansion introducing the old cartoons. This proved an apprpriate device for what was self-consciously a film retrospective, and was surely the easiest means of linking films as disparate in subject matter as the parody space opera *DUCK DOGERS IN THE 24½ CENTURY* and the Wagnerian burlesque *WHAT'S OPERA, DOC?* Having already been used, however, this method would seem tiresome in *LLL*; moreover, the new studio presumably wants to signal that new stories with the old time characters are now going to be done. So *LLL* breaks down into three "acts," each working a number of old films into a new storyline with the help of brand new footage. This is not at all a bad idea at first glance, and the first and third acts are particularly inspired in fitting cartoons with very different subjects into a coherent whole. In the first, "Satan's Waitin';" the devil keeps sending Yosemite Sam to different places and time periods, so that he can appear in such unusual guises as the Roman Empire soldier of *ROMAN LEGION HARE* (1955) and the Arab warrior of *SAHARA HARE*(1955 also). In the third act, "The Oswald Awards," very dissimilar cartoons are presented as films shown before an audience at an awards ceremony.

In practice, however, the good idea falls apart. *ROMAN LEGION HARE* and *SAHARA HARE* are entertaining enough when viewed singularly; the other two cartoons in the "Satan's Waitin'" segment—*HARE-TRIMMED* (1953) and especially *WILD AND WOOLY HARE* (1950)—are decidedly weaker. The gags, pacing, and characterization in each of the four are ordinary (for Warners cartoons) and predictable. The truly damning factor, however, is that gags and storylines of these four cartoons are all very much alike, and moreover, are very much like those of *KNIGHTY KNIGHT BUGS!* The entire first "act" of *LLL* consists of little more than four slight variations on the formula of the cartoon shown at the very beginning!

The similarities among the five cartoons present enough of a problem; showing all five back to back compounds it. Notice that in CBS's ninety-minute *BUGS BUNNY-ROAD RUNNER SHOW* on Saturday mornings, one rarely finds two Bugs cartoons, for example, programmed one right after the other. Instead, there is often a Roadrunner and a Sylvester cartoon, or a cartoon of another short, between two Bugs shorts. Significantly too, frequently there is only one cartoon with Yosemite Sam during the entire show. Similarly, *BB-RR* did not follow up one cartoon with a very similar one; indeed, the cartoons in *BB-RR* are all quite different from one another. Even when Jones presents three Daffy Duck shorts in a row, in the movie, they turn out to be such dissimilar films as the aforementioned *DUCK DODGERS, ROBIN HOOD DAFFY*, and the surreal *DUCK AMUCK*. I suspect that the reason for the cuts he made in *LONG-HAIRED HARE* and *OPERATION: RABBIT* in *BB-RR* (which, by the way, do not seriously weaken either one of these fine shorts) were done so as not to strain the audience's patience with gags that were simply "more of the same." The only exception to the rule in *BB-RR* is the twenty-minute Roadrunner sequence that has been assembled from many separate shorts; the fact that this sequence never seems tiring or repetitious is proof of the skill and care with which it was put together, as well as of the strength and cleverness of the individual gags. The Yosemite Sam sequence in *LLL*, in contrast, quickly becomes wearisome.

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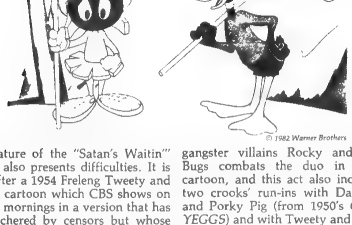
The fact that the four Sam Shorts have been worked into one storyline also ends up sabotaging their effectiveness. The "Bugs at home" intervals in *BB-RR* and the commercial breaks in the Saturday morning show enable the audience to take a collective breather before heading into the next short. The hell sequences in "Satan's Waitin'" keep the storyline going full steam ahead, and thus help further wear down the audience. I was quite aware as I watched *LLL* that the audience laughed less frequently as the film progressed.



The nature of the "Satan's Waitin'" storyline also presents difficulties. It is named after a 1954 Freleng Tweety and Sylvester cartoon which CBS shows on Saturday mornings in a version that has been butchered by censors but whose excellence shines through nevertheless. The cartoon's greatness comes from the unusual means by which Sylvester loses each of his nine lives one by one (each ghost, bearing his own number, then seats himself beside the others on a bench down in hell, as if in a waiting room), Sylvester's reactions to his approaching doom, and the quick pacing, which creates the impression that Sylvester is trapped in an inevitable cycle (see *ENDNOTES* in *CF #16*). *LLL*'s version with Sam fails to create interest in any of these ways. Worse, since Sam is twice sent to hell as the result of something Bugs does to him, we are forced to look upon the heroic rabbit as a murderer. Moreover, while this storyline explains how Sam can range so widely through time and space, surely even little children will wonder how it is that Bugs keeps popping up in places as different as the American West and ancient Rome.

The best thing about *LLL*'s version of "Satan's Waitin'" is the design and animation of Satan himself. Although the new footage in both *BB-RR* and *LLL* is done in full animation, the characters look as handsomely drawn as ever in the new sequences of *BB-RR* while they sometimes look somewhat "off" in *LLL*'s new footage. The Yosemite Sam we see in hell is simply not as well drawn as the one in the old cartoons: there is something a little crude about the way he looks. Satan, however, is drawn and animated quite well indeed.

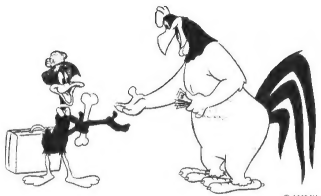
Act Two is "The Unmentionables," named after and incorporating the 1963 Freleng cartoon, and centering on the gangster villains Rocky and Mugsy. Bugs combats the duo in the title cartoon, and this act also includes the two crooks' run-ins with Daffy Duck and Porky Pig (from 1950's *GOLDEN YEGGS*) and with Tweety and Sylvester (from 1953's *CATTY CORNERED*). Not one of these three cartoons is worthy of inclusion in this film, and the first is particularly weak. The movie even sabotages *CATTY CORNERED* through a new sequence in which Bugs makes Sylvester a G-Man with the mission of rescuing the captured Tweety. In the original short, Sylvester was not out to save Tweety but to devour him; hence, the new introduction renders much of the cartoon (including its climax, when Sylvester is wrongly honored for his bravery in rescuing the bird) inexplicable.

Why did Freleng bother with these three cartoons when he could have used the far better *BUGSY AND MUGSY* (1957) and *BUGS AND THUGS* (1954)? The latter reaches grand comedic heights in its ending, when the imprisoned Bugs, all by himself, fakes a police raid on Rocky and Mugsy's hideout, tricks them into hiding in a stove, then enacts a quarrel between himself and a cop (played by himself) for the benefit of the cowering pair, which ends when Bugs turns on the gas in the stove and throws in a match to prove to the cop that the crooks are not in there. No sooner does the stove explode than a real police car pulls up, and the cycle begins again, forcing the utterly beaten Rocky and Mugsy desperately to give themselves up.

Obviously Bugs makes a very strong impression in that cartoon. Yet another problem with most of the Bugs cartoons in this compilation is that he tends to take too much of a secondary role to his co-stars. Only in *HIGH DIVING HARE* in the film's final third does he emerge fully as the cool manipulator of events who clearly dominates every situation.

The movie's final act, "The Oswald Awards," begins with various Warners cartoon characters making star entrances at a theatre where one of them is to receive an award for best actor in an animated film. Oddly enough, though Foghorn Leghorn makes a particularly spectacular entrance, strutting arm in arm with two showgirl chickens, the film does not bother to identify him. But with Daffy's arrival, the sequence gets some life: his egotism and jealous hatred of Bugs are always entertaining.

With act three we get at long last four of Freleng's best cartoons. *THE THREE LITTLE BOPS* (1957) is a unique gem; it is a recounting of the story of the Three Little Pigs, that makes both the Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf jazz musicians. Both the narration and the dialogue are done in time to the cartoon's jazz score, which runs throughout the short. The next short, *BIRDS ANONYMOUS*, the Academy Award winner for 1957, is a most unusual entry in Freleng's Tweety and Sylvester series. On the prompting of a saintly cat from "B. A.," Sylvester swears off hunting birds, only to be plagued by his growing need to catch and eat Tweety. The high point of this film is a montage sequence showing the comically desperate Sylvester tossing and turning in bed, unable to sleep. The short ends nicely with the exposure of the hypocrisy of the cat from B.A. in thinking he himself could deny his true emotions. Then there is *HIGH DIVING HARE* (1949), a superb Bugs vs. Sam cartoon that provides the ultimate in "cyclical" comedy as Sam literally falls (off a diving board) for Bugs's trickery again and again. (See *Endnotes* in *CF #16*). Finally, there is *SHOW BIZ BUGS* (1957), which wonderfully defines Daffy's obsession with outdoing Bugs at any cost, and which surely served as the basis for their ongoing competition on the prime time *BUGS BUNNY SHOW* of the early 1960s. This cartoon is so dominated by Daffy that Bugs, the nominal star, becomes



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practically a minor character in it. Daffy continually trips himself up in this short while Bugs humbly, innocently, and rather blandly goes about his business. This Bugs is much less interesting than the wily rabbit of Jones and Maltese's Bugs vs. Daffy cartoons, who takes obvious pleasure in calmly manipulating the duck whenever the latter steps out of line, and showing him who is really in control. Nevertheless, the gags, pacing, and characterization of Daffy are so strong in this cartoon that any question about Bugs's handling becomes irrelevant.

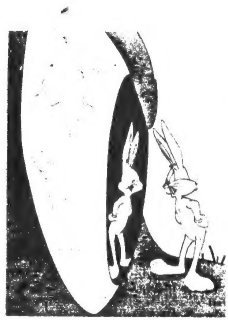
It is good to see the Freleng was willing to include a cartoon like *THE THREE LITTLE BOPS* that does not feature one of Warners' cartoon "stars." The absence of Jones's most celebrated "non-star" cartoon, *ONE FOGGY EVENING*, is the one real flaw in *BB-RR*.

Unfortunately, Freleng and company do not seem to know when to stop tinkering with their cartoons. The first three cartoons in the "Oswalds" sequence are presented as films being watched by the audience of the Oswald Award ceremony. These shorts are continually interrupted by cuts to the characters talking in the audience, thereby damaging the films' pacing and distracting the real audience for *LLL* from becoming caught up in their stories. Moreover, instead of allowing the short to fill the whole screen for its duration, every so often *LLL* does a long shot showing the Oswalds audience watching the short on what now seems a small screen. Again, this is highly distracting. *SHOW BIZ BUGS* is presented as a competition between Bugs and Daffy onstage during the ceremony, but it is not left undamaged either. New footage is inserted of brief convsersations between the duck and the rabbit which merely slow the short down without imparting anything that was not obvious in the original cartoon.

One wonder if Warners is aware of a certain section of this film's audience. Although, as I have noted, the cuts in *BB-RR* were made quite skillfully, a number of cartoon aficionados have told me they wish that they cartoons had been left intact. Imagine how they will react to the cuts in *LLL*. Warners will presumably eventually market video cassetts of *LLL* as it now does of *BB-RR*. I suspect that many potential buyers will prefer to record the entire cartoons off television rather than purchase a compilation of such oddly edited versions.

There is one odd aspect of *LLL* that must be mentioned: it is absolutely fearless about death. A standard observation about Warners cartoons is that a character can be crushed by a boulder or caught in an explosion without suffering any real harm. *LLL* takes the principle one step farther: a character can actually *die* without suffering any real harm! In "Satan's Waitin'" Yosemite Sam dies and returns to life over and over, and although at the end of the sequence he decides to stay in hell rather than face Bugs Bunny again, he is alive once again when he arrives for the Oswald Awards ceremony. The Big Bad Wolf of *THE THREE LITTLE BOPS* gets blown up by his own dynamite and goes to hell, but at the end of the short his ghost has joined the Three Pigs' band, and the Wolf as well is alive and present at the awards ceremony, where he watches his death on film! Daffy blows himself up at the end of *SHOW BIZ BUGS*, and although he does not go to hell, he does wear a devil costume. Daffy has not returned to life by the movie's end, but his ghost is still around, complaining that "You have to kill yourself to win an Oswald." (One might also note what I presume to be the origin of the awards' name: Freleng began his career working on Disney's silent *OSWALD THE LUCKY RABBIT* cartoons. This makes it even more appropriate that Bugs, another rabbit, wins the Oswald.)

Despite its flaws, I hope that *LLL* does well financially, because it is good to see new work being done with these great old characters. If Warners can come up with good new scripts for the characters—and there is as yet no evidence one way or the other—it would be wonderful if it could turn out features with all new animation instead of just compilation films. Who knows? If Warners had successes with new adventures of Bugs, Daffy, and company, perhaps a certain other studio would finally start regularly taking Mickey, Donald, and Goofy out of mothballs as well. *LLL* may induce headaches, but let us hope it represents a start towards better Warners cartoons in the future.



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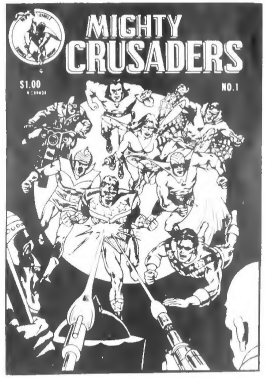

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